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WOOD-PILE RECOLLECTIONS

BY

CHARLES LOUIS OLDS

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TO

MY WIFE

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"The woodsmen are splashing logs."—See page 111.

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Wood-pile Recollections

CHAPTER I.

THE WHY OF IT.

I SOMETIMES wonder why I so delight in sawing wood. Sawing wood in itself is work, hard work, and I am—well, rather inclined to dislike work; but yet the back yard with its saw, axe and pile of wood, is my paradise. In season and out, whenever I have a few spare moments at home, I am out at the wood-pile. During my hours at the office my mind involuntarily strays from the work in hand to the delightfulness of sawing wood; and the moment that the clock points to five, I hurry home as though drawn by a lodestone, and, donning an old coat and hat, make for the wood-pile, and there for an hour or more, if the weather be favorable, I exult in the sharp, ringing sound of the saw as it eats its way through the wood, stick after stick,

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CHAPTER II.

THE LAW OF RECREATION.

I HAD an uncle, a merchant, residing in the city; he knew that I was a good accountant, and offered me a position with him, which I gladly accepted. It may be asked why I did not take up the carpenter's trade, or some vocation in which the use of the saw was a predominating feature. But if this thought should come into the mind of any one, I am sure that, after reflection, he will agree with me that it would be a crime on my part to engage in such an occupation. Think of my outraged feelings at having to compel myself to saw wood; to cause my source of pleasure to become work! If I should make sawing wood my occupation, where then would I find my pleasure and recreation! The traditions of my whole life were opposed to it. It was opposed to the law of recreation and recreative enjoyment, the gist of which is that "we are always sure that we should prefer any other occu-

pation to our own;" hence comes the pleasure that we business men feel when we are sawing wood, working in the garden, or taking the baby out for an airing, after our day's work at the office is over. Jimmie, one of my friends, who agrees with me, or I with him, upon every subject that we have yet discussed, believes that upon this law hangs the poet's very existence. He reasons it out somewhat after this fashion: "Why are we sure that we should prefer any other occupation to our own? It is because we see our own occupation in its reality; we are cognizant of it in all its details; we imagine nothing of it, and the imagination is everything to the poet. The poet writes of the moonlit sea, the enjoyments of rustic life, and love in a cottage, and yet he knows little or nothing of them; he has been compelled to draw on his imagination for all detail, he only knows of their bare existence; he himself may live and die within the four bare walls of an attic, and yet he is a poet, one of the class that begins to exist in the world only after death. But he never writes of his attic life; he is too well acquainted with it; it is a sober fact to him, and he is not fond of sober facts; yet to me the attic is full of poetry, and lives in my memory as a pleasant dream. This law is the result of the imagination, and without the imaginative highly developed the poet does not exist."

This seemed rather strange doctrine to me at first, but I was not long in seeing the logic of it.

Speaking of poets, I believe that there are many poets, though few can express what they feel. The poor ploughboy going to his work in the early morning, feels in his soul the poetry of his surroundings—the beauty of morning, the singing of the birds, the exquisite blending of colors in the landscape—all these fill his poet's heart with joy: he rejoices that he lives and that his soul breathes in these beauties. The ploughed field is to him not merely a mass of ploughed ground of a stupid gray color, nor is the field of stubble next to it mere stubble. If you were to ask him about it, he, perhaps, could tell you nothing, and a blank look would come into his face, and yet in his soul he feels the beauty of all around him so blending as to make one beautiful whole. He is a poet, and, like the artist, sees and feels everywhere in nature that perfection that the hand of man cannot destroy, try as he may. Nature is so all-sufficient that nothing but beauty results, no matter whether she remain in her wonted course, or be turned from it; whether she be viewed from her inner sanctuaries or only from her portals.

Nature's beauty is phœnix-like: from the ashes of the old the new springs with its ever chang-

ing harmonies. She endues herself with garments in endless variety. When she is despoiled of one robe another as beautiful still clothes her. A rent in her dress is already repaired, inasmuch as the rent in no manner makes the robe less beautiful. Nature so blends all colors that her rags and tatters are no less beautiful than her May Day dress, or her pure white winter robe. All colors suit her complexion; she never suffers from what she wears; she is the world's color matcher. All things that are blemishes with man are beauty spots with her. The hillside with its single patch of snow is beauty, so also the snow covered field with its dark-margined brook. Yonder field where the fire has swept through the grass is black and sere; and yet this very blackness so harmonizes with the rest of the landscape that there is naught but beauty. Nature is like the kaleidoscope: shake it and change it as you will, you cannot produce an unlovely form. But let us return to the wood-pile.

CHAPTER III.

AUNTS AND OTHER THINGS.

I HAD not been long in my uncle's employ, when he urged upon me the necessity of a married life. I objected strenuously. Why should I seek out a wife? Was not my present existence a happy and contented one? Did I not have short hours and light work at the office, and had I not made a satisfactory arrangement with my landlady whereby I could pass several hours each day in her back yard sawing wood? And when darkness prevented this pleasing recreation, was there not the social evening at the Sawyers' Club? I found later that my uncle was not entirely responsible for these suggestions. I should have known this from the first; married uncles never make such suggestions of their own free will; they understand that a young man may have other things to occupy his spare time besides getting married. But aunts are different; they hold a most peculiar relation to one; they are, before marriage, something akin to the mother-in-law

after wedded life begins, the difference being that aunts are match makers while mothers-in-law are match breakers; the one is content when the match is made, while the other is never content after the match is made; where the work of the one ceases, that of the other begins, nor does it end till death or the divorce court looms into view. At least, Smithers says so, and Smithers is a man of experience.

It was my custom to take my Sunday dinner and spend the evening with my aunt and uncle. It was at these times that my aunt imposed herself upon me with a view to the furtherance of her schemes, at first only hinting, but finally boldly proclaiming that I needed a wife, and that a wife I should have. I meekly submitted to her plans, at least I outwardly appeared to agree with her, for I knew my aunt too well to do otherwise, though inwardly I was resolved to defeat her, just when she was sure that victory was hers.

And so it came to pass that I was initiated into society—invited to concerts, balls and dinners; and the fair ones were marshalled before me by my aunt, and I before them. But, oh! how often I wished that I was back at the wood-pile, or at the dear old Sawyers' Club. For the selfishness of man is such, that when he is deprived of any of his wonted pleasures, he immediately re-

bels. However, remembering the rôle that I was playing, I made it a point to be as agreeable as a gentleman well could, especially among the ladies, and soon became quite popular with "the set." But Fate often has strange surprises in store for us, and we suddenly find ourselves doing exactly the reverse of what we had planned to do, and most willingly and eagerly too. Consequently I am glad to make the statement here, that it was Fate, and not my aunt, that so suddenly changed my views respecting married life.

It was one evening at a *soirée,* toward the end of a season that had been considered unusually full of pleasure, though of displeasure to me, that I met a young woman who unusually attracted me; yes, I may say, forcibly attracted me. I saw much of her that evening, and the more I saw the deeper was I impressed. It was not that she was more beautiful than others of her sex, nor were her accomplishments of greater merit, but her conversation and her manner were simplicity itself, and this simplicity charmed me; yea, more, for when I touched her hand as we said "good night," I felt, for the first time in my life, a most delicious thrill pass through me, a thrill that awoke a dormant something within me and made me glad.

That night, for the first time in years, I

did not dream of the wood-pile and its fascinations; no, nor yet of the Sawyers' Club with its cheery fire and cheerful companions. No, my dreams were all of a lovely maiden, with deep blue, fathomless eyes, who smiled down upon me from away up there, in that indefinite somewhere in dreamland, and she seemed to be trying, trying so hard to tell me that—that I would never, never have a mother-in-law.

And so, strange to say, I found, on further acquaintance, that my dream had been true in one detail at least: the poor girl had no mother. How sorry I felt for her then! But now—ah! that is different.

My aunt was delighted when I informed her of our engagement; and she immediately began to try to prove in various ways how instrumental she had been in paving the way, and in finally bringing it about. In fact, she was so delighted at her success, that she induced my uncle to offer me the junior partnership in his business as a present on my wedding day. "And now, my dear boy, that you are married," she added, "I trust that you will give up that silly practice of sawing wood. You must now give your whole attention to your business and your home. And your position in society will not admit of your exposing yourself to possible ridicule." I did not answer her, but a

savage joy was in my breast as I thought, now that I had a home, I could once again have a wood-pile of my own; and what is home without a wood-pile!

CHAPTER IV.

HOW I DISCOVERED JIMMIE.

NOT long after taking up my lodgings with Mrs. Slate, and gaining permission to saw wood in her back yard, I made what was to me a remarkable discovery; that is to say, the beginning of what proved to be a remarkable discovery. I had noticed regularly every afternoon, at exactly 5:30 o'clock, a young man of pleasant appearance cross over the street, pause, intently watch me at the wood-pile for a few moments, and then, recrossing the street, proceed on his way. I did not think much of this at first, but as time went on and the regularity of his appearance at 5:30 P.M. became an established fact, I became somewhat curious as to what brought him there. Surely it could not be that he would take the trouble to cross and recross the street just for exercise, or still less to gaze at a mere stranger. I closely scrutinized the back yard and its contents, but could see nothing there that should so attract him. Still he kept coming promptly at that hour. In

fact I often regulated my watch, which always ran a little fast, by his coming. Promptness was evidently one of his virtues, and if there is one quality in an individual that I value more than another it is promptness. A person who is always prompt is evidently trying his best to keep square with the world, and promptness, as I take it, is the beginning of charity; and when I find a man who is always on time I feel that I can trust him. That is the way that I felt about the individual who made his 5:30 o'clock pilgrimages across the street to our back fence.

I soon grew to look for that light, curly head and boyish face, and I felt a genuine pleasure come over me each day when I heard his quick, nervous step as he crossed the street. It was not long before our intimacy was such that we felt free to indulge in such observations as, "Been a hot day, hasn't it?" "Fine weather for June!" Comfortable afternoon, isn't it?" Gradually our conversation took on a wider scope, but I noticed that he never referred to the wood-pile, though, whenever he fancied my eyes were not on him his gaze would be longingly fixed there and his face would light up wonderfully.

One hot afternoon in July, after the usual salutations had been exchanged, he looked me straight in the face and asked if I minded whether he

sawed a stick or two of wood. Of course I told him that I should be delighted. Nothing delights me more than to share a pleasure with one who fully appreciates it, and I felt sure from my observations that here was a man who was unusually appreciative; for a man does not ask to saw wood on a hot July afternoon unless he fully appreciates the favor he is seeking and it is one of his chief pleasures. He lightly vaulted over the fence and took up the saw in a way that showed that he had handled it before. I stood and watched him saw through a great stick of oak, and it was plain the moment that he began that here was no tyro; in fact, I could not have done better myself. As the saw ate its way through the wood and gave forth its clear, ringing voice his face broadened into a smile of satisfaction and I could see that he was happy.

We afterward sat down in the shade, and he confessed to me the story of his boyhood, so much like my own—how he had come to the city and his chief enjoyment been taken away. It was this homesick feeling, this envious longing at seeing me so happy, that had caused him to stop for a moment each day when returning from his work at the bank. This is how I discovered Jimmie.

CHAPTER V.

MR. SLATE.

Mr. Slate is Mrs. Slate's husband, and Mrs. Slate is the lady whose lodgings I occupied prior to Fate's triumph over my matrimonial misgivings. Mr. Slate is also an inventor. He is the unfortunate possessor of genius. Throughout his long life he has been possessed of genius, and many are the brilliant ideas that have found a resting place in his brain. In fact, he tells me, these ideas often come so thick and fast that he is compelled at times to resort to a stimulant that his weary brain may keep pace with them. However this may be, Mr. Slate certainly does know how to file a saw, and I felt after a month's experience that, come what might, he alone should have that privilege.

But there is one thing that I deprecate in Mr. Slate: he confines his genius too closely. He rarely displays it outside of tack hammers. Now, I believe that tack hammers are all very well in their way, and most useful articles when needed,

"The ice glitters bluely."—See page 68.

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but I object most emphatically when it comes to having tack hammers for breakfast, tack hammers for dinner, tack hammers for supper, and, metaphorically speaking, to have a tack hammer thrown at your head every time you come within hailing distance; but, what is most exasperating of all is to be calmly sawing wood in the back yard, with a clear sky overhead, when suddenly a shower of tack hammers descends upon you. This I will not stand, and I have given Mr. Slate fair warning. I have also reasoned with him and endeavored to persuade him that his genius should have a wider scope than tack hammers—that he should work out his ideas on other lines besides. Why not make use of the same principles in the construction of screw drivers, nail clenchers and various other articles of like utility? But no, Mr. Slate will devote himself continuously to nothing but tack hammers.

What I deprecate still more in Mr. Slate, is his habit of intruding tack hammers upon one's privacy. Privacy should be respected, and this Mr. Slate does not do. He seems to think that tack hammers give him the entrée everywhere and at all hours. I had not been a week with the Slate family, when one forenoon I found Mr. Slate pulling the tacks out of the carpet in one of my rooms with a strange fashioned tack hammer. He said

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that he was experimenting with a new tack hammer. Being as yet almost a stranger in the family, I was considerate of his feelings and said nothing. This is where I made a fatal mistake. I should have objected then and there, as my silence encouraged him, and practically gave him the open door to further experiments. But now that the mistake had been made, I must defend myself as best I could with tied hands.

And so it was that I found Mr. Slate, at all hours of the day and night, pulling out or driving in the tacks of my carpets. I would find him there when I came home from the office, I would find him there when I was about to retire for the night, and I would find him there in the early hours of the morning, being roused from sleep by the thud of his tack hammers. I tried locking my doors at night, but in a few days the keys would be missing, and the early morning thud would be revived. Then I bought some patent locks and applied them to the doors. All went well for about a week, when I was again awakened from my early morning nap by the sound of tack hammers in my room. I jumped out of bed and donned my dressing gown, but when I had reached the other room the tack hammers had disappeared, and to my surprise I found the door still locked as when I had retired for the night. I brought

my keys and undid the fastenings, when out went the door into the hall with a crash; Mr. Slate had gained an entrance to my room by slipping the hinge bolts from their places. This last feature of Mr. Slate's perseverance decided me. I saw how futile it would be to try to keep him out of my rooms as long as the carpets were there, and so I packed them up and sent them to the storage. After that my rooms and I were in peace as far as tack hammers were concerned.

About this time I came near having a falling out with Mr. Slate. It was July, and we had rains nearly every night during the month. Now as a usual thing I was glad to have it rain at night, as it would in all probability be fair the next day and I could take a goodly share of enjoyment in sawing wood in the open air. To really enjoy sawing wood the open air is needed; sawing wood in the wood house because of rain is most objectionable, and should only be used as a last resort. But to return to the cause of my trouble with Mr. Slate.

My bedroom was on the second floor and looked out upon the tinned roof of the veranda. Now, I found during the first night of the rain that there was a most deplorable leak in the region of the eaves directly above the veranda and my window. I was in the habit of keeping this window open,

and had the bed moved close to it, that I might enjoy the cool night breezes. I had just dropped to sleep that night, when I was roused by a succession of the most frightful noises. It sounded as if Mr. Slate were trying to use all of his tack hammers at once on that tinned roof, and the water was flying in great jets into my face and over the bed. Well, the only thing for me to do was to get up and shut the window; and as the bed was too wet to be occupied again that night, I dressed, and then tried to go to sleep in my chair. But Mr. Slate's former incursions into my room with his tack hammers had made so deep an impression upon me that, try as I would, I could not sleep. My imagination was too active and it forced reason aside. It told me that those sounds on the roof were due to tack hammers; the rain was only a coincidence, and it would not be long before Mr. Slate with his box of hammers would come into the room through the window. And so I sat, sleepless, through the night, listening to that hammering on the roof. When the rain would cease for a few minutes, and there was only an occasional drip on the roof, it seemed to me that he was pulling out the tacks again, so similar is the "drip" of rain and the "rip" of a tack hammer when extracting tacks from a tinned

roof. But reason asserted itself again with daylight.

The next morning I explained the matter of the leak to Mr. Slate. He assured me that he would fix that all right in a few minutes, and proceeded to ransack the garret for pieces of old carpet, which he laid on the roof to deaden the sound of the rain. But that night the rain came with considerable wind, and the carpet was soon fluttering on the front fence. Then the tack hammers began once more and the experiences of the previous night, barring the wetting, were gone through with again. I was angry and felt like upbraiding Mr. Slate. Any one ought to know that a carpet is not the thing with which to mend an eave-trough, no matter if the carpet has been in the garret under the eaves for years. I spoke to him about the matter and urged that he get a new trough. He said that he would fix it all right this time. But the next night I found more carpet on the roof, this time held in place by stones at the corners and along the edges. I went to bed with the feeling that this time the tack hammers would not wake me; I remember that I even smiled as I thought of my security from disturbance. But I was not to get off so easily. The wind, finding that he could not swoop the carpet up at one breath, as he had the night previous, gradually worked his way

under one edge; then, about midnight, with a whoop, he rolled those stones away, and off went the carpet in his embrace. I thought it was steam hammers this time, as the stones rolled and bumped on the tinned roof, but in a moment the tack hammers began again, and I knew what had happened. Next morning I asked Mr. Slate to go with me into the yard, and when there I silently pointed to the veranda roof. He looked, but did not show the least surprise at seeing the carpet gone; he simply muttered an interrogative "Yes?" and started for the garret again to procure more old carpet.

"If you are going to carpet the top of that stoop again," I called after him, "why don't you do it the same as you do a room? Here is the opportunity of your life to experiment with your tack hammers!"

He stopped as one dumbfounded, and then slowly said:

"Why didn't I think of that before?"

That evening his wife told me that he had been on the veranda roof all day experimenting with tack hammers, and that in future there would no longer be any danger of my being kept awake by the sound of the rain on the roof.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SLATE FAMILY, EXCEPT MR. SLATE.

THE Slate family, excepting Mr. Slate, consists of Mrs. Slate and Jane. Mrs. Slate is deaf, very deaf; so deaf, in fact, that she has become melancholy. Whether her deafness is due to Mr. Slate's lifelong experiments with tack hammers is more than I can tell, but, to say the least, it is not improbable. I was once inclined to the opinion that the melancholy was traceable to tack hammers, and came upon her before the deafness, for I know that tack hammers are productive of melancholy in the long run, unless insanity supervenes before the melancholy has time to fully establish itself. But after long and deliberate discussion with myself I came to the more mature conclusion that the melancholy was secondary to the deafness. I based my conclusion upon the fact that Mrs. Slate is a very plump woman, I might even say ponderous, in build, and I have learned that before her deafness became marked she tended toward leanness. Those who primarily are affected with melancholy usu-

ally become emaciated. Now, with this evidence before me, it at once becomes palpable that the deafness was due to tack hammers, and that the melancholy naturally followed from no longer having sufficient nerve stimulus, *i. e.*, tack hammers to make her life an active one; hence, also, the great gain in avoirdupois. At times Mrs. Slate cheers up and the melancholy leaves her. This is particularly noticeable when anything of a sad, mournful or melancholy nature occurs, either in the house or in the immediate neighborhood, as accidents, sickness, or death. I suppose that a believer in homeopathy would account for this by telling you that it was only one of the many instances in every-day life where the homeopathic law was demonstrated. However this may be, it is certain that Mrs. Slate becomes cheerful, yes, happy, when sickness or death stalks round about.

One of Mrs. Slate's pet ideas is that she is an abused individual. Her memory is becoming somewhat deficient, and with this there is a lack of self-confidence. When any one of her customary domestic duties remains unperformed she looks reproachfully about and says:

"Nobody never reminds me of nothin'! I don't have nobody to think about me," and even Mr. Slate's tack hammer conversation which he shouts into her ear trumpet fails to console her.

Jane is nominally the servant, but practically the one live being in the household. She has been with the family so long that no one seems to remember that she is other than the daughter of the house, and certainly no one could depend more upon a daughter than does Mrs. Slate upon Jane. I hear her call from the bottom of the stairs: "Jen, won't you come and cut the toast? I'm so 'fraid I'll get it too thick or too thin!" Or I may hear her calling to Jane in the orchard to come and see if the grease is hot enough for doughnuts.

Jane's lungs are not as sound as lungs should be, and at times they give her great trouble. She always keeps up till she drops, and when she does drop Mrs. Slate's helplessness is pitiful. But it is then that I pity poor Jane the most. It may be that she has passed a night of suffering and, worn out, has just dropped to sleep, when up rushes Mrs. Slate to her room and says: "See, Jen! what a nice beefsteak the butcher brought! Do you think it will do?" And then Jane is obliged to open her tired eyes upon the steak and give it her commendation. In a short time Mrs. Slate is up a second time, wanting Jane to taste the stewed prunes to see if they are sweet enough. They are, and Jane at last settles into a good sleep, only to be awakened an hour afterwards by Mrs. Slate's wanting to know if she needs anything, and Jane pensively

answers: "Only sleep." Mrs. Slate is a kind-hearted woman, but she is sublimely unconscious of her selfish thoughtlessness.

Some time after taking up my residence with the Slate family I was taken ill, and for several weeks was confined to my room. Jane took the best care of me while she was well herself, but in course of time she was seized with one of her worst attacks of lung difficulty. Mrs. Slate was with her for a time at the beginning of the attack, but after a time she came into my room, ostensibly to fix the fire, but really to pour her woes into my unsympathizing ear. She was pale with fright and anxiety. "Jen can't scarcely breathe," she said, rolling her eyes. "It's just dreadful to see her! I've got mustard acrost her," she continued, motioning wildly, "and if that don't do her good nothin' will. I don't know whatever would become of us if anything should happen to Jen! Why, I couldn't keep house without her!" Meanwhile Jane was suffering from want of the care which Mrs. Slate could have given her. As it was, Mrs. Slate's care, as my own experience testified, was little better than neglect.

But Jane was not the only sufferer at this time. My tired nerves rebelled at Mrs. Slate's attentions. She was, as I have said, a "fleshy" woman; the whole house shook when she walked, and in my

highly nervous state each jar was felt as a blow in my brain. At mealtime she would come panting and puffing into the room with uncertain step, holding before her the "tea-board." When she had safely deposited it at my bedside she would smile and say to the personification of a poor appetite before her: "There, now, set and enjoy your dinner as long as you want;" while failure to consume all that she saw fit to bring was a personal affront to herself. Her nursing was certainly not poor from want of desire that it should be of the best, for, occasionally remembering my sensitiveness to noise, she would try not to speak loudly, and the result was that the lips bending over me would move without emitting any sound whatever. This was more exasperating than the noise, but I feared to hurt her feelings by telling her so. But soon her natural loquacity would overcome her prudence and she would talk, talk, talk, in an increasingly loud tone, until suddenly her conscience would smite her, and, turning away with an air of abject self-disgust, she would say: "There! Now I 'spect I've said too much!"

There is something wonderfully pathetic to me in Jane. She has great, hungry eyes that are always looking longingly upon the world's brightness, as if contrasting it with the dulness of her own face and her own life. A story is a rare treat

to her, and in her few spare moments she devours every book that comes within her reach. Once when she was feeling particularly blue I told her that I believed in looking on the bright side of life. "Yes," she said, "*your* life has a bright side," and I was dumb before her, for even my philosophy could see no glimmer of the bright side of her life.

There are two things that Jane loves above all else—Poll, the parrot, and watching me saw wood. After my return in the afternoon she would often take her sewing and sit in the shade near me while I was sawing wood. The song of the saw had a fascination for her and she looked happy. I often wanted to ask her if she did not think that this was a part of the bright side of her life, but I feared to break into the present happiness. It was evident that the song of the saw took her miles away from her every-day drudgery, and why not let her remain in those Arcadian fields as long as possible? Surely the sober facts of life would return all too soon in any event.

Jane's other love, Poll, the parrot, was as wicked as he was wise. He was prone to anger, and when angry he swore a terrible Spanish oath, at least Jane said it was, and I never undeceived her. "Caramba!" the parrot would say, "Caramba!" which grieved Jane deeply. "He doesn't know it's wicked," she would say. "A sailor on the ship taught

it to him when he came over, and I can't break him of the habit."

It was one day during my enforced stay in the house that Poll disappeared. Jane hunted all over the house for him, blamed herself a thousand times for having left the door of his cage open, and was melting into tears, when Poll was discovered perching high upon a tree in the front yard. Then she called to him and enticed him with all the wiles that her loving heart could suggest; she held out his familiar cage to him; she reached out to him with a long pole; she followed him as he migrated from tree to tree. Mr. Slate came to the rescue, the neighbors came to the rescue, but Poll seemed too much for them all. Finally he flew up into a tall tree and to all intents seemed satisfied to stay there. Faithful Jane, hoarse and tired with calling and crying, waded through the snow that covered the ground, and climbed the tree, still laden with the cage and pole. Poll persistently kept hopping just out of her reach, and finally the poor girl was obliged to give up, as he flew away over the road and into the next yard, where he was lost to sight. Never shall I forget Jane's sorrow when it came over her that Poll was really gone! No mother ever grieved more deeply over a lost child than she did over Poll, and even my hard heart was melting when a neighbor arrived bearing Poll in

his arms. Jane's delight was ecstatic, and Poll was kissed and petted as naughty children often are when they are lost and found again.

The one great fault that I have to find with Jane is that she is too orderly. It has been said that upon the three sides of a room should be written, "Be orderly, be orderly, be orderly!" and upon the fourth side, "But be not too orderly!" Jane's creed inscribes, "Be *always* orderly" upon all four sides of the room, and in the four corners as well. I arrange the different articles which belong to me in what I deem to be natural order, and which I delight in calling orderly confusion. If I happen to drop a book or my pipe on the floor I let it lie there until I want it again. I stick photographs and cards and other knickknacks in my mirror in artistic irregularity, and if I happen to drop my cigar ashes on the bureau or on the floor I feel that I have added still more to the artistic effect of the room. It does not do to range your slippers and shoes in rows along the wall if you would be artistic; they should drop from your feet wherever your feet happen to be, and remain there until you want them again, or kick them aside because they are in the way. The trees of the forest do not drop their branches or leaves in regular heaps of so many inches in diameter, nor do the wild flowers spring up in rectangular beds; and yet their order

is perfect. If you would have your room artistic, if you are seeking for harmonious effects, do not try to be orderly. My motto, when in my room, is: Have a place for everything, and let everywhere be that place.

This orderly confusion of mine is a real trial to Jane, but this is something I cannot help. When she does up the room she uses the corners of the looking-glass as if they were try-squares into which the cards and photographs must be exactly fitted; my shoes stand like soldiers along the wall, and the books on the table are used to construct rectangular parallelopipeds—in fact, she infuses into the whole room an atmosphere of painful symmetry. But this matters little to me; in fact, I rather like it, as it again gives the opportunity for the natural artistic to develop in a slightly different, though equally pleasing, manner. Ah! Jane, I miss you now that I am far away and living under other and different conditions, but I bless you for your sweet life of utter unconsciousness of self, and I render you homage as the first woman of my acquaintance who took unstinted pleasure in the art of sawing wood.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SENSATION OF "HAVING BEEN THERE BEFORE."

WE HAVE most of us had that sensation of "having been there before," and many are the theories that have been advanced in explanation of this phenomenon. One of the latest and best received shows that it is due to the successive action of the cerebral hemispheres. These hemispheres are supposed to act in unison ordinarily, and when one does not act "right on the tick of the moment" with the other, this phenomenon results. But however true this explanation may be, it still leaves us in the dark as to the essential cause, or the reason why one hemisphere lags behind the other, like a lazy horse on the nigh side. I say the nigh side, as it is believed that the left hemisphere is the one that lags. It is my opinion, however, that the real cause will be found only when we examine into the influx which the soul receives, and by which it lives. But that would take us into the realm of spirits, and—spirits? No! No! No! What have spirits to do with the action of the body! I am afraid of them! I'll not have anything to do

with them! I don't believe in them, anyway! It would be so unscientific! Why, I should be mad to think of such a thing as a spiritual cause! No! No! No!

It is not, however, my intention to search into causes too closely, but to remain satisfied with the ultimation of that cause over which there is so much dissension. This feeling of "having been there before" is not experienced by all individuals, but of those who do experience it the great majority may be said to meet with it but once in a lifetime; others observe it several times, while a few, a very few, have almost daily experiences, at least they say they do, and it is not meet for me to contradict what I cannot disprove. Billings belongs to this latter class, or more specifically to subdivision (*a*) of this class, for the hemispheres of Billings' brain get into the state of successive action not only in the daytime, but even at night. He claims that he is conscious when one hemisphere begins to lag behind the other, but this I very much doubt; not that I doubt Billings' veracity, but I think that he has mistaken the source of the sensation which he feels. Billings first felt this sensation, he tells me, when on his maiden visit to the town of Blairfield. The day was hot, and he had stepped into a nearby saloon for a cooling draught, when, just as he had touched his lips to

the foaming glass, he was startled by the feeling of "having been there before." Now, he knew that this was impossible, and the effect upon him was so weird that he felt obliged to follow the beer with a little liquor to steady his nerves. Billings believes that liquor is good for the nerves when one is startled. I, myself, should eliminate the phrase "when one is startled." However, he did not feel this sensation again for nearly a week, when he and a friend went bathing in a little lake about two miles distant from the town. He says that he had never visited the spot before, nor did he know of the existence of the lake two days previous. They had donned their bathing suits, and he was just rising from his first plunge in the water, when like a flash came the sensation of "having been there before." This so startled him again, he says, that he involuntarily opened his mouth and swallowed a portion of the lake. Billings always did open his mouth when anything unusual happened, so I feel that that part of his experience, at least, is true. That night Billings left for a little town ten miles farther up the state. He put up at an inn that he had never seen before. After being shown to his room that evening and just as he had got himself tucked into bed that sensation of "having been there before" came over him once more, and again he called for some of his nerve tonic. I

feel sure that these experiences and nerve tonics would soon have made an end of Billings had he not been enlightened as to the cause of the former, and shown that they were nothing supernatural. After he had ascertained that there was no likelihood of bodily injury resulting from his experiences, providing he was more sparing of the nerve tonic, he became overmuch proud of his acquirement, until it seemed as if there was nowhere, nothing, or nobody, of which, or of whom, he was not aware. It really was wonderful what these experiences had done for him; the knowledge he had gained of persons and places and things was almost incredible. When I would present him to a friend he would invariably say: "Ah! I am so glad to see you, but I feel certain that I have met you before." And when a new book or a magazine article was spoken of he would be perfectly familiar with it, although he was not aware of his knowledge until the subject had been presented to him; but present any subject whatever, be it literature, art or science, fishing, bull fighting or poker, he was immediately aware that he had seen it, heard it, read it, or been there before. And when we were traveling together in New York, and one day visited the prison at Sing Sing, where so many once prominent men have been incarcerated, he

murmured, "Yes, I have been here before." Is it not wonderful! Simply wonderful!

I have many a time endeavored to learn from Billings what mysterious power he possesses, what extraordinary action is going on in his brain, but he says that he cannot explain it to me. All that he can tell me is, that when he comes upon a new object, he has a peculiar sensation in his brain, and he immediately knows that he has seen it, or been there before. He says that the man who wrote, "There is nothing new under the sun," was subject to these experiences, and was simply hinting to the world of the existence of this phenomenon. I, myself, have just discovered that Billings, under an assumed name, wrote that famous song, "Oh! I've been there before many a time," though he denies it point blank. But I think that any one can see that no one but a Billings could have accomplished it, and there is no one belonging to his class, metaphysically speaking, hereabouts, so it is self-evident that he is the author. Billings certainly has a wonderful gift.

But there is a serious side to Billings' acquirements. His experiences have cost him dear. Formerly he was manuscript reader to a large publishing firm, but he was forced to resign from that position, as he could not decide with certainty whether manuscripts were original or stolen. He had the

feeling that he had read them all before. But politics came to the rescue. He knows everyone whom he meets, and this is the great essential of a politician.

I often wonder if, when Billings dies, he will take this gift with him. I wonder if, when he awakes in the other world, his first words will be: "Ah! but I feel certain that I have been here before." I do not pretend to know whether he will go up or down, but if he should go down—I don't believe he will, though—but if he should go down, I wonder if, when he has passed through those darksome gates—I wonder if he will smile and say: "How strange! Why, I feel that I must have been here before!"

CHAPTER VIII.

JOYCE.

JOYCE had the misfortune to become infatuated with two ladies at the same time. For months he had been searching for some means whereby he could decide which one he should select for his life partner. Both of these maidens were beautiful, though one was dark and the other fair, but then Joyce admired equally both types of beauty. They were of the same age, so age could not help him to decide. And as far as their demeanor toward him was concerned, there was no choice, for although the dark one greeted him with smiles and roses, the fair one always parted from him with tears and lilies, and one was just as much to his taste as the other. In fact, in Joyce's eyes there was nothing in the one maiden that suffered when compared with the same in the other, and how one could decide under such circumstances was a poser. He had, indeed, thought of tossing up a penny and trusting to chance, but on further reflection he decided that this method was too vulgar and only to be used as a last resort.

"The frozen river and the bleak, frozen mountains."—See page 68.

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In this uncertain state as to his loves, he came to me for advice. Now I make it a point to be very chary about giving advice. I find that people who are always asking advice almost never follow it when given. That I am speaking of good advice naturally follows. Bad advice, as a matter of course, is usually acted upon. But Joyce worked upon my sympathies and got the better of me, and finally I consented to interest myself in solving the problem of his life choice.

After considering the matter over night, I suggested to Joyce that he try fortune tellers. He jumped at the suggestion, and said that he knew where two of them had their stands. "Yes," he said, "I believe that this is the true method by which to solve the question." And he brightened up and could talk of nothing but fortune tellers during the remainder of his stay.

I met him in the evening at the club. There was a suspicious look in his face, and his manner toward me was cold and reserved. I saw at a glance that his mission among the fortune tellers had not produced the result anticipated, and this was his way of repaying me for my advice. But I knew that it was only a matter of time when he would ask my pardon, and incidentally more advice. And sure enough, two evenings later he came into my rooms with a sheepish look on his face and related his ex-

periences with the fortune tellers. It seems that soon after leaving me that afternoon he had met a fortune telling woman. Yes, she could tell him all about his love affairs and give him the best of advice, she said. And then she described the maiden of the fair hair, praising her great beauty and lauding her many admirable qualities; telling of the love that was, and of the wealth and happiness that were to be. "She is the maiden of your choice," she added, "but beware of the dark one! I see the dark one's face. Beautiful as the crimson rose is she, but of her beware; she would bring trouble to you both. Yet all shall yet be well. Bide you your time." He was somewhat startled at this revelation of the brunette's disposition. It seemed hardly possible that she should be so jealous. But he was glad to know her in her true character, and he wondered, as he walked up the street, what evil she would try to perpetrate upon him and the fair one. How glad he was now that he really knew at last which one it was to be! How it had simplified matters! Ah! there was another fortune telling woman across the street. Perhaps she could give him more detailed information of the deviltry the dark one was hatching up. He would try anyway. Yes, she could tell him all about the past, present and future, she said. All love affairs were an open book to her. "The dark one is the maid of

your choice. None are more good or beautiful than she. She has raven hair and jet-black flashing eyes. The crimson rose grows pale beside her blushing cheek. Beauty, and love, and happiness shall be yours, but beware of the fair-haired one! I see her pale-skinned face. Fair as the lily-flower is she, but of her beware. She would bring trouble to you both. Yet all shall yet be well. Bide you your time."

This flat contradiction of the first fortune teller's prediction of the lady who was to make his home a paradise left him in a more obscure state than before as to the methods of discriminating between the two ladies, one of whom he was sure that he could love more than the other if he only knew which one. Yes, if he only knew which one! And he sighed deeply. He seemed to feel so utterly miserable that I took pity on him and tried to assure him that all would be well if he would but wait. I believe that the great secret of success when in doubt is to wait. I tried to impress Joyce with the importance of this principle, but in vain. He felt that he must be doing something; he could not rest until every means of discovering the one maiden had been tried. Could I not suggest some new means? I considered a short time, and then asked him if he ever dreamed. Yes, he dreamed, and could compel himself to dream on any subject that

he chose. "Then," said I, "compel yourself to dream of your future marriage for three successive nights, and the maid who is really of your choice will appear to you in each dream. For, although you are not at present able to say which one that is, no doubt you have unconsciously chosen, and the fact is recorded within the brain." He seemed delighted, wondered that he had not thought of this means of solving his difficulty before, declared that he would begin to compel himself that very night, and promised to report his success three days later.

I patiently waited the three days' limit, but no Joyce. Then I waited three days longer. Still no Joyce. This irritated me. Why did he promise to come on a certain day and then fail to keep the engagement? If he did not intend to keep his promise why did he make it? That was the way he was repaying me for the good advice I had so cheerfully given him. Well, that was the last advice he would get from me. Even though he had failed, I did not guarantee that this would solve the problem. No, not any more than a physician guarantees that a certain prescription will cure his patient of the gout. Yes, Joyce's actions reminded me very forcibly of those of a certain class of ignorant persons who go to a physician for some chronic ailment, and if they are not cured by one or two treat-

ments off they go to some other pillmonger. And was not Joyce's trouble a chronic one?

However, I saw him on the street the next afternoon, and, although he tried to evade me, I was too quick for him and in a moment had him by the coat collar. I demanded an explanation. What did he mean by such outrageous conduct toward a person who was trying to befriend him? Why did he not keep his promise? He said that he had been trying to get to see me, but could not explain there on the street. I insisted. He tried to put me off. I would not be put off. He said that he would walk with me to my rooms and there explain. This was quite satisfactory, and we walked uptown together.

When we had reached the rooms he sank into a chair, completely collapsed. He said that the dreams had been a failure and he had given up all hope of ever being able to solve the problem. He felt condemned to go on through all his life loving the two maids. "Think of my prospects," he said, "to be compelled to pass all of my life unmarried, loving with a double love these two, loving as few can love, and yet it must all go for nothing, a non-producing, helpless love." I was touched by his abject, helpless condition, and, seeing that he was not entirely responsible for what he did or did not, I concluded to say nothing more about his not keeping his promise.

"But could you not compel yourself to dream as I suggested?" I asked. "Tell me about your experience." Well, he had been able to dream of his future marriage, but the dreams were so contradictory that he was in greater doubt than before; in fact, had become utterly hopeless. In each dream he seemed to be standing before the altar with the fair one on his right arm and the dark one on his left, while the minister was reading the marriage service. At length, raising his eyes from the book, and with an expression of condemnation, the minister said: "Which of these two maidens wilt thou have for thy wedded wife?" Joyce stood there dumbfounded, unable to reply; then in a moment the dream would be dissipated, and he would wake with a nervous tremor running over him, which left him prostrated. What could he do? Must he go on through all his life thus, with a wife just beyond his grasp, and all because he could not decide which of the two was the destined one? "I can advise you but once more," I said, "and if the suggestion fails the case is a hopeless one, but I do not think that it will fail. The test is a severe one, only to be used in extreme cases like your own; and, what is more, I have never seen it result otherwise than favorably to the one using it. Have you ever told them of your passion for sawing wood?" No, he had

never mentioned it to them. "Could you give up the pleasure of sawing wood for the finicky sentiment of any woman, or anybody else?" Why, of course he couldn't; he was a sawyer, wasn't he? "Go to them, then," I said, "and explain fully your passion for sawing wood; relate it in all its details, and show them the many sacrifices that your wife will have to make on that account. This will decide for you. It can hardly fail." He jumped up and seized me by the hand. All his old energy and fervor seemed to have returned, and, calling me "good fellow" and "good old boy," and other endearing names, he wrung my hand once more and was off.

I did not hear from him again for months, and supposed that he had forgotten me in the happiness of married life; then one day I received a letter from him, saying that he was about to be married to a lady in a nearby town. "The wood-pile test was too much for both the dark one and the fair one, and I decided that with tastes so foreign it would be madness to marry either. But I have found the right one at last. In due time you will receive your invitation to the wedding. Only sawyers and their wives will be invited. Relatives who are non-sawyers will be debarred. The wood-pile test is all right."

CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING SYMPATHY.

IT ALWAYS irritates me in the extreme when any one attempts to sympathize with me. When things go wrong I feel that I have enough to bear without the extra burden of sympathy. I simply wish to be left alone to fight out the battle myself, to win the victory myself, and not have my trouble smeared over with sympathy, only to break out with renewed vigor afterwards, like some disease suppressed for a time by a powerful medicine; only in my case there is no suppression, but an immediate aggravation of all symptoms. Sympathy expressed at such times makes me a perfect bear; I feel that the sympathizer nine times out of ten is a mere flatterer, a dealer in platitudes, a conventional hypocrite. These may seem hard terms, but I feel strongly on this subject and speak my honest convictions. Of course I do not mean that the sympathizer is necessarily a flatterer and hypocrite in other things; he may be honor itself, but when he sees a friend in trouble he feels that he must con-

dole with him, and he forces himself to make some sympathizing remarks, though he does it in a shame-faced sort of way, meanwhile edging toward the door, his real nature unconsciously drawing him away from such scenes as these. These are the make-believe sympathizers that one meets at every turn of Fortune's wheel. There are, however, people who truly sympathize with you, but they never tell you about it; they do not rush in at all hours of the day and night to remind you how much their hearts are grieved by your illness or misfortune. They keep away from you, and if you chance to meet them they do not run at once to condole with you; they are not seeking to trade off their sympathy for your favors; no, they rarely speak, but the sympathy in their souls shines in their open faces and acts as a balm to your aching heart. It is a soothing and delightful thought, after the gamut of honeyed words has been passed over, after the poisoned sweets of sympathy have been pressed upon you, to know of those countless unknown thousands who cannot sympathize with you; and still more to know of those few dear friends who will not come to make you ill with words of comfort, who refrain from seeing you, but who have in their hearts a loving thought for you, a depth of sympathy that runneth still.

But when I have the blues there is one solace

that never fails, one comfort that is always welcome: the wood-pile always remains the same, steadfast and ever ready to gratify my whims, a friend indeed, that fails not to recreate my jaded spirits. The saw sings to me the song of life; no song of Beethoven could speak more plainly, nor tell of strife and sorrow, of hatred deep, of love and of victory's crown at last. Its ringing notes thrill through my every part, now moaning, sad and desolate, again on even tenor, and then exultant, loud, inspiring, awakening to lofty thoughts and wish for noble deeds, but most of all to live in truth my proper life.

But there is another reason why I abhor this so-called sympathy, this sympathy which is contagious, yes, infectious, and even epidemic. If not a disease, it is at least disease producing, and that disease we know of, yet we know it not. No organ in the body is its seat of power, and yet it sways them all. Unseen, in babyhood, perhaps, it winds its silken threads about the child and binds them fast with mother's sympathy. And if, as the child mounts up in years, she fails to break these bonds that link her to herself alone, and craves still more this sympathy, if in the growing girl this craving grows, till she devises plans for gaining sympathy, invents means for obtaining it, demands it on the slightest pretext, and lives on it, her

doom is sealed: Hysteria gains her prey. And yet the maiden does not die; she cannot die of this disease, though death were easier. The first attack comes from some fancied slight, or selfish motive balked, or punishment too long delayed. She thinks she knows that she will die. The family stand about her bed and weep, and wring their hands, and tell of all her goodly ways. This feeds the patient's selfish soul and she revives, much as a starving man by eating food. Yes, she revives, and sympathy in showers falls on her luckless head.

Again, we find the woman on her couch, about to breathe her last, or so at least it seems. Friends and relatives gather in the house. Two doctors consult in an adjoining room. The preacher is there with his sermons and book of prayers. The room smells sick from drugs, and through the shuttered windows a broken wave of light falls across the floor. The children of the house have stopped their play, and, though they do not understand, a fear and dread of something has reduced them to silence, broken only now and then by a frightened whisper. The air of the house is pervaded with expectation, and the company in silence look into one another's faces. The patient gives a deep sigh, there is a gurgling in her throat, and she appears to have drawn her last breath. Would that it were so! But, no; in a few minutes she is up and

around the house; in a few hours she is eating her dinner; and that night she sleeps the sleep of the innocent. The doctors look angry, but collect their fees; the preacher looks grave, and collects his sermons; the friends look at one another, and collect their wits; and the patient—well, she collects her energies for a similar séance in a few days, weeks, or months. But the next time her audience is less numerous. The doctor comes, of course, but he knows that he cannot cure her. She is incurable. She must suffer on, and her suffering is horrible. She is suffering from an excess of sympathy; it has congealed in her every part, and now makes one with her life; it has crowded out and taken the place of that better part, the love of use to others. Now selfish love reigns high and drags her where it will. Atropos alone can save her from her miseries; but long she stays her hand.

CHAPTER X.

MY NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR.

My next-door neighbor and I never exchange visits, although we are on the best of terms, and almost daily stop and chat over the back fence about sawing wood, for he also is a lover of this unsurpassed form of recreation. Still we never visit each other. There seems to be a mutual understanding that we are to avoid each other except when we are in the back yard. And it seems to be equally well understood that our conversation be limited to "sawing wood," although no word has ever passed the lips of either of us to this effect. Yet there seems to be an indefinable something that prevents our conversation on other subjects. But as to that, it matters little, for let a sawyer talk of his woodcraft and he cares little what the rest of the world is doing or thinking. Sawing wood is to him an all-pervading topic of which he never tires. It is to him food for the body, and for the mind as well. It is the secret spring which opens the treasure box of the heart and reveals a paradise before unknown.

This indefinable something that confines our in-

tercourse to the wood-pile puzzled me greatly for a time. I could see no reason why we should not care to visit each other in our respective homes. It was not that my neighbor had no interest in literature, art, or politics. I knew that he must be an educated man, otherwise how could I account for his love of sawing wood?

After pondering over this matter of the invisible barrier that separated my neighbor and myself, except when removed by the open sesame of the wood-pile, after studying the subject of spheres, auras and primitive substances, I came to the conclusion that there was an heretofore undiscovered force, which, remaining latent under ordinary conditions, immediately becomes active when two personalities of antagonistic tendencies concentrate their thoughts upon the pleasure of sawing wood, and particularly when that pleasurable sensation is about to be gratified, thus bringing about a temporary affinity between the two minds.

Smithers, who is inclined to delve somewhat into philosophy and science, agrees with me. Otherwise I should have hesitated to speak my views on the subject. Smithers, however, goes so far as to say that I have only stumbled upon one phase of the law. He believes that it is of the widest application, and that the principles on which it is founded have reference primarily to the will and the under-

standing. He believes that man has two prime faculties: the will and the understanding; in fact, that the will and the understanding make the man, are the man *in toto*. The will, he says, is the exponent of love, and the understanding, of wisdom. Every man has a predominating love for some one thing, a love to which all of his other likes and desires are subservient, and, according to this predominating love or passion, he leads his life, or rather his predominating love is the life which actuates him. Now, in all natures where the predominating love is the same, as, for instance, the love of sawing wood, there is affinity and desire of association, and all subservient loves, even though they be antagonistic, do not produce discord. The general sphere of each man's life will correspond with that of the other, each will desire his fellow's comradeship, and this as long as the predominating loves remain the same. But where in two men the predominating loves differ, even though the subservient loves are in common, there can be no permanent desire for each other's companionship. The essential life of the two differs; the life-sphere that surrounds the one will not coalesce with that of the other, except temporarily, when two common subservient loves come to the fore. This law or force is known, and yet it is not known. We all have felt its influence, yet we know it not.

CHAPTER XI.

HASHEESH.

THERE was a space of several months during which, by reason of an injury, I was unable to indulge in sawing wood. For some days after the accident I was confined to my room and could not even have the satisfaction of gazing into my back yard paradise. I grew uneasy, miserable, wretched, downcast, and was fast settling into a melancholy, such as comes when one is forced to abstain from any habitual doing which is firmly inrooted in the life. I felt much as the tobacco user feels when forced to give up his beloved weed, only with him the primary effect of so doing is merely corporeal, while with me it was a mental torture and affected the inmost recesses of my life. One of the sawyers who looked in every day noticed this apathy that was gradually stealing over me and soon divined the real cause of it. He related a similar experience of his own. Hasheesh had at once relieved him. He advised me to try it, and the next day brought me a supply of the drug.

Soon after he left, about 9 A.M., I believe, I took

one of the pills that he had brought me, and, lying on my bed, closed my eyes. I slept I do not know how long, but when I woke I felt a sense of exhilaration, my whole being thrilled deliciously, and every sense seemed awakened as never before. When I looked about me the room seemed changed, enlarged. Larger and larger it grew, until I was in a vast hall whose walls stretched far away in the distance, while hundreds of feet above the ceiling hung like heaven's canopy. Meanwhile the sweetest music charmed my ears, and on the papered borders of the walls a thousand fairy forms were seen, that danced and sang enchantingly. My room seemed one vast paradise. I shouted for joy and clapped my hands in glee. My soul seemed bursting with uncontrollable ecstacy. My mental and physical powers seemed without bound. The beating of my heart resounded in my breast with a great voice, and when the chamber clock pealed forth it sounded like a mighty bell on some cathedral tower, and reverberated down the long room until my ears ached from the sound.

Then I heard outside the house my neighbor sawing wood. How the saw did sing! Exultant, sweet, harmonious, sublime. It almost seemed a human voice, and then not only seemed, but was, a clear and rippling song—a song of hill and vale in gentle Spring's embrace. Then in richer, fuller tones it

sang the Summer's madrigal; next, in mournful tones, the dying year, and Winter's dirge so sorrowful that I wept tears of sympathy.

Now a joyful, glorious song burst forth, and all the room seemed ablaze with color—colors such as mortal eyes had never seen; contrasts in rapid succession that afforded supremest delight. Sound and color blended in perfect correspondence; each musical expression had its color; each note its shade of color; a harmonious blending of color and sound; now the light was flashing, brilliant, living, as the music soared triumphant; now of shade more delicate as the song-words softened; again of alternating crimson sheens when tones of love were heard, darkening to livid black for hatred's angry voice; for black is but perverted red, as hatred is of love. And then it sang of infant's birth, and sheens of white and golden light flashed to the music's sound. Music both seen and heard. Music ecstatic, sublime. My whole soul throbbed and exulted with uncontrollable delight at this vision of paradise.

But suddenly a change took place about me. A change took place within me. I seemed to change my form. I was myself the saw, a giant saw, who stood in fear of naught. I roared and buzzed and voiced my heart of steel. A stick of wood upon the floor seemed a great log. I whirred my deep dis-

dain. I pounced upon it then, and darted up and down, while planks flew off on either side complete and sawdust filled the air. And then I sang a pæan triumphant.

I slept; and when I awoke it was nearly dark. I still felt the thrills passing through me, but feebly. I took a second dose of hasheesh. This is where I made a great mistake, a mistake from ignorance of the action of the drug; for when even a small quantity is superinduced to prolong the ecstatic state this state is often converted into one of the deepest horrors.

Again I slept; and when I awoke the music was still to be heard, but now it was more sad, and the walls of the great hall seemed to approach me. Nearer and nearer came the walls until they stood close to my bed, and the ceiling almost pressed upon me. Sadder and more melancholy grew the music. Presently the walls, the ceiling and the floor withdrew from about me, and stretched farther and farther away, until at last they were lost to sight and I was left alone, utterly alone. Not a sound was heard except the wailing music's voice; and thick darkness enveloped me. The world had departed and I was alone. 'Twas terrible to be the only one; 'twas terrible to be alone. Alone! "Oh, God!" I cried; "alone!"

And then the walls returned and grouped them-

selves to form an oblong furnace, open at one end. Its sides were now of iron and arched with bars of steel. At the furnace's open end a demon stood, and piled the red-hot coals with wood. He turned and smiled—an awful smile, a smile of hell two-fold—and, mocking, said: "You now are about to expiate your sinful love of sawing wood; your love of loves shall tortured be, for you shall burn by your own wood. Your wood-pile feeds the fire of Satan's wrath." And now the music shrilled with notes from hell, and howled with impish glee. Then Satan stood beside my bed. He clasped his clammy hands about my waist (each hand reaching twice around), and drew me toward the fire. The fiendish music still wailed on. At the open end of the furnace there was a moderate bluish fire, and as you went farther back the heat became more intense, first red, then white. He drew me slowly toward the blaze, and presented me head-first to the flame. I fought with all my strength and skill, but they availed me not; he slowly pushed me on. And now all hell sang madly, a lullaby of hell they sang. From the blue he pushed me gradually on to the red, and from the red slowly on toward the white heat. When I had reached the red I thought I could stand the heat no longer. I struggled to release his hold, bu in vain; I was pushed slowly on toward the white heat, when suddenly the fire

abated, the heat grew less intense, and I felt that I was saved. And then great Satan howled with rage and asked the cause of this. The demon shrieked: "His wood-pile's all consumed!" Exhausted by this fearful torture, I slept; and when I awoke at length 'twas day.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN THE ICE GOES OUT.

WHEN the river is frozen from shore to shore, and the ice glitters bluely in the frosty sunlight, then Nature seems dead indeed. I go out of my back yard of a Winter's morning, and, standing on the river's bank, gaze up and down the silent, frozen valley, gaze at the single crow that sadly wings its way over Summer's grave-yard, gaze at the frozen river and the bleak, frozen mountains that tower above me clad in their robes of death; and my heart grows sad within me. This beauty of death brings sadness, a sublime sadness, a sadness that is awful. Everything is cold and dead except myself! Everywhere the same grandeur, beauty, sublimity, death! This want of life oppresses me. The frozen stillness weighs me down. I retrace my steps as though returning from the grave of a friend, and, entering the house, I commune for hours with the past.

But when the ice goes out of the river life again seems to return to the earth. Although the little valleys and ravines may still be deep with snow

"When the ice goes out."

and the mountains mottled with black and white, the stillness is now broken by the roar and swirl of waters, and the groaning of the departing ice—the river's music.

It is a wonderful sight when the ice goes out. It may have been raining for several days, or the sun may have been pouring his increasing rays upon the dead earth, until the spirit of life is again awakened within her. And now, as by a well laid plan, and at a preconcerted signal, the water nymphs, loosing themselves from icy bonds, rush upward with a bound, causing the river for miles to rock and seethe, and billows of ice to rise and fall. Presently the ice begins to move with many a groan, and crash, and grating sound, and we know that Winter's crunching heels are passing. And now the onward rush begins, the battle of ice with ice for a place in the all too narrow stream; and in the conflict, amid roaring, and creaking, and seething, and the deep boom, boom, of the icy water, great blocks of ice of ten tons' weight are cast upon the beach, and, as the waters rise, block upon block is added, until Nature has lined the shores with a wall of ice six feet high and twenty, perhaps, in width. And in midstream, where a sunken rock lies just below the water's surface, is piled a mound of ice like some vast marbled structure—a monument to dying Winter.

Meanwhile, between its icy walls the ice-stream flows, compact, one single mass, one endless stream of ice. Now can be seen a cake of ice a hundred feet in width and length, surrounded by a thousand satellites; now on some great block a mighty tree is borne; now a large boulder from some mountain side glides by upon its icy barge. And when upon a moonlight night I stand and gaze upon this scene I seem to see the hordes of Winter hurrying to their doom, passing in grand array, sublime in all their agony. I turn away my face and groan, but not for long; the cold light of the moon upon the swiftly moving band in white, the rushing water's voice, the sound of shivering ice, the shock and crash that make the ground tremble beneath my feet, have too great fascination, and I watch till the moon goes down, and darkness settles over the charging mass of white. And then when in my bed, I listen to the purring and singing of the ice, which soothes me like a mother's lullaby.

In half a day's time the scene has changed: the walls of ice are still there, but the water has fallen several feet, and the force of the foot-thick ice can now be seen where it has cut into the frozen gravelly bank, and terraced it as neatly as could an experienced gardener. Now the ice no longer runs in one continuous stream, but between the broken,

rounded and reduced cakes, the water is seen to swirl, and leap, and frolic in the morning's sun, as if rejoicing once again in its greater freedom.

When the ice goes out the wood begins to run to some extent, though not as it does during the later Spring floods, or during the Autumn months. Yet it does run, and that to me is sufficient, for, next to sawing wood, catching it is my passion. Of course one does not catch much wood when the ice is running, but one at least can catch at it. It is something like going a-fishing, for, although you may not catch any fish, you still have the satisfaction of fishing, and, perhaps, the added gratification of a bite. But still I do catch some wood, although it is a difficult and somewhat dangerous feat; for when you make a thrust at a passing log or bit of wood, and miss it, the chances are that you may hook a large-sized cake of ice, and either lose your pike-pole or be dragged into the water amid the jagged ice. And then again there is the danger of the shore-ice on which you stand being undermined by the water and suddenly taking you with it into the stream. I myself always make a platform of boards over the ice, the outer end resting on a jutting rock near the shore, and, pike-pole in hand, watch for the infrequent pieces of wood. And when I do strike one with my pike, if it be at all large, what a struggle it is to bring it to the

shore through the ice cakes and boiling water of a twenty-mile-an-hour flood. Wood caught in this manner always holds double value in my estimation, and I am very careful to have it conveyed at once to my back yard. When I saw this wood I carefully preserve it, like all things for which we have to struggle, and place it in a pile by itself; and then I give stringent orders that it is only to be used when my wife bakes pies.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHY JONES SHRUNK.

THERE is a brand new baby at Jones's house; that is to say, Jones is the once-proud father of a bouncing baby boy of some weeks. I say once-proud, because Jones was proud the day that the baby arrived; he was a changed man in his pride; he towered to such an extent in his pride that all things seemed insignificant to him; the club room was too small for him, the earth was too small for him, and even eternity could not be reckoned with. Jones swelled, his face swelled, his feet swelled, his body swelled, and alas! his head swelled. But now all of those parts and members have shrunk; Jones himself has shrunk; and the wide, wide world has grown wider. And all of this because of an heretofore undiscovered law, which I now for the first time reveal.

It is a well established fact that a babe weighs more at birth than on the day following, and that during the third day it usually regains in weight what was lost, again weighing the same as at birth. I have often noticed that this is the period of ju-

bilation with the expanding father. His pride almost invariably increases and decreases in an inverse ratio to that of the baby's weight. The first day the fond father expands somewhat, and the baby begins to decrease in weight; the second day he recovers from the first surprise, and expands to the full, and the baby's weight drops to the lowest notch. But as the baby now begins to increase in weight, so does the father's jubilation to wane; and so on until a state of equilibrium of baby's weight and papa's pride is reached, which occurs usually on the fourth day of baby's life. But there is no stopping here, for the inverse ratio continues for an indefinite period, depending upon certain circumstances which come under the head of "Unforeseen." After this indefinite period has passed the inverse ratio becomes direct for the most part, and baby and papa are happy.

Now, Jones was amenable to this law of the inverse ratio, and he, of course, acted in accordance with it; he couldn't help it, that is why I am explaining his peculiar actions, and once for all showing the world that law underlies every action, and that every effect depends upon the medium—in this case Jones—through which the cause is acting.

Jones was formerly a great clubman. When you went to the club of an evening you were just as

sure of finding Jones there as you were of finding smoke in the smoking-room. He came early and was among the last to leave. But now all this is changed. The club sees Jones no more. And all because of the baby. I met him on the street one day and asked him why he no longer came to the club. After lying several ill-constructed lies, he finally confessed that it was all because of the baby. He said that he did not need much sleep, as any one could see by his former late hours at the club, but still he did need some sleep, and since the baby was three days old, he needed the whole evening and night as well, not in which to sleep, but in which to try to sleep. He said that the baby did not cry all night by any means. That was the trouble. If the baby only would cry all night long he thought that he could manage it. Then he would become accustomed to it, and drop off to sleep, just as we do in the presence of any continuous noise. But it was the irregular intervals of crying that upset him so much. He would just get to bed, perhaps, when the baby would begin to cry. Then he would wonder how long the baby would keep it up, and while wondering he would be lulled off to sleep by the sound. Then the crying would stop and he would awake, just as one awakes from sleep in a Pullman berth when the train stops. Then he would again lie awake, wondering how long the

baby would sleep, and if it would begin to cry as soon as it awoke. In this expectant state of mind he would go to sleep again, to be awakened, of course, by the first whimper from the cradle. By using the entire evening, and the night as well, he could not help getting some sleep, he said, but it was wearing on him, very wearing.

This is why Jones shrunk.

If it should be asked what this has to do with sawing wood, or the wood-pile, I can only say that in my opinion whatever has to do with a sawyer has to do with the wood-pile. And whatever affects the wood-pile is certainly worthy of explanation.

CHAPTER XIV.

GLENMORE WAS CURED OF INSOMNIA.

ever tell you," said Glenmore one evening
b, when conversation had begun to lag,
as cured of insomnia, and how I came to
he delightfulness of sawing wood?"
f us had heard the usually reticent Glen-
k of this before, and so we settled our-
his story, which as nearly as I can quote
follows:
y seem odd to you that I speak of insom-
awing wood in the same breath, as it were,
will understand the connection between
my case at least, as I proceed with my nar-
And, besides, I think that you will agree
e, after due consideration, that there is
which does not, either directly or indi-
ave a connection with the wood-pile.
not owe my wealth, as Rawlins here, to the
le, or any of its connections, but I do owe
wood-pile what is far more precious than
I refer to sleep.

"I started life as a poor boy, a very poor boy, but I worked. I gave my whole life and thought to the task in hand. Others might take their holidays and spend their evenings in various amusements, or at home, or the club, but with me it was work, always work—work as a boy, work as a youth, work as a man. When by this diligence I had gained a competence I worked the harder; and the harder I worked the harder I wanted to work. For the last few years of my business life I applied myself so closely that night after night I would scarcely get any sleep, and finally when I realized that my constitution was breaking down, and that I was killing myself, Morpheus, whom I had mocked for so long, utterly deserted me. I sought the advice of the best physicians everywhere, but the prescriptions which they gave would palliate for a short time only, and then I would be worse than before, if that were possible. One advised me to travel; another to ride the bicycle; a third to play golf. I tried all of their suggestions, but they availed me nothing. I tried everything that anybody suggested, but a good night's sleep was as far away as before.

"I lived at that time in a suburban town, about thirty miles from the city, where for ten years I made daily trips, and for no other purpose than to ride on the street cars. Each morning after break-

fast I would take the ten o'clock train for the city, and there, boarding a horse car, would ride to the city limits and back. During this ride I would get perhaps fifteen minutes' sleep, rarely half an hour. Then after lunch I would go to the theatre. I was very fond of the theatre, not because I enjoyed it as others do, for I never witnessed the performance, paradoxical as it may seem. As soon as the orchestra began the overture I would settle back in my seat and sink into a semi-sleep, if the term is allowable, and remain in this partially unconscious state until the play was concluded.

"After this, with my valet, James, I would visit a certain billiard hall, where I again would find slight repose. If no one was using the tables I would have James and one of the attendants start up a game. The sound of the clicking billiard balls was most grateful to me, and usually I could doze along in that half-conscious manner for half an hour. Presently I would return home, pass a sleepless night, and in the morning return to the round of the day before in my search for a few minutes' sleep.

"It was only on Sunday that I obtained anything that really could be called sleep, and that only after the following circumstance: I was not in the habit of attending church; in fact, I had not entered a church for some years, not so much from

unbelief as from indifference, until an old college mate, now a minister, came to make me a visit. When Sunday morning came I felt obliged to attend him to church. Well, gentlemen, during that sermon, for the first time in years, I enjoyed a sound sleep! Oh! what a relief that sleep was to me! Never before, I believe, did a sermon do me so much good! Never shall I cease to thank my old college mate for taking me to church that day!

"After that experience I never missed a Sunday at church. And I believe that no minister ever before had a member in his congregation who longed so ardently for the sermon to begin. How often I wished that the days could be one continuation of Sundays, or that the minister's sermon would last on forever!

"One hour's sleep a week, gentlemen, and a few hours of dozing! Do you wonder that my nerves were so unstrung that I would start from my chair with a cry even from the sound of scratching a match to light my own cigar? One hour's sleep a week, gentlemen, and a few hours of dozing! Do you wonder that I bless the day that sent a sawyer to me to suggest that I listen to the song of the saw? Do you wonder that I hired a man to saw wood under my window all night long, when that sound alone gave me the required sleep? Do you wonder that that was the means of curing my in-

"The sinuous valley and lofty mountain slopes."

somnia? No need to wonder, either, that I always kept a plentiful supply of all kinds of wood in my back yard, and that I delight in sawing wood myself as well. Yes, and whenever I fancy that my nerves need a tonic I saw wood. And when I am sawing wood and think of the utter helplessness of those doctors in my case I often fancy that I hear the saw give forth this song:

"'What shall I do? My nerves are unstrung;
What shall I do? What shall I do?
What shall I do? Joy's knell it has rung!
O tell me, ye wise men!

"'Never a wise man knew what to do,
Never a one! Never a one!
Big words they uttered, but found not a clue;
This was beyond their ken!

"'But the great Dr. Crosscut ne'er makes a mistake;
He's never wrong! He's never wrong!
He saw at a glance the right method to take—
"Why, string them up again!"'"

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. ANIMULE.

MRS. ANIMULE was our servant. She will go down into my family history as having been our servant. Not because she was our servant for a long period of time, but just because she was Mrs. Animule, and happened to be living with us for some weeks.

Mrs. Animule is a widow with three large children, and she gave us to understand that she was not an ordinary hired girl. She was entirely above that. But then she had three large children, and anything that she could add to her bank account she was willing to accept. Mrs. Animule was also a miser. She had the tall, spare frame of the miser, the long, slightly curved nose, and the thin, pursed lips that are supposed to be necessary to greed, and the cold gray eye that burns brightly only when gold lights it up.

Mrs. Animule claimed also that she was somewhat deaf, but this was not true in the ordinary sense of the word. Deafness, as I take it, refers to an impairment or loss of the sense of hearing, due

to some morbid affection of those organs whose function it is to receive sound. And Mrs. Animule was not so affected; that is, if I can judge by the way she knew of everything that went on in the house. But there is a species of deafness that has not to do with the ear, with which Mrs. Animule was profoundly affected. I refer to the deafness of conceit. This mental deafness was characteristic of Mrs. Animule. If she was told to have pork and beans for dinner we were sure to have steak or a roast. When a pudding was suggested for dessert we were sure to get a pie or—nothing; and when she was told not to make the coffee so strong it would be served of the consistency of molasses. When asked why she did not do as she was bidden her deafness was always in evidence. But when we grew to know Mrs. Animule better we became accustomed to order that which we did not want, and then we were sure of not getting it. For instance, if there was a certain kind of cake that I disliked it would be ordered, and when tea time came there was sure to be some other kind of pastry.

But Mrs. Animule's mental deafness did not end with the preparation of food. Its scope was as wide as the field of her activity. It was to be found in everything that she did, taking on the most peculiar and fantastic forms, changeable like the clouds of an autumn sunset. It frequently led

her to believe that she had performed certain tasks that had not yet been performed. For example, if she was asked if baby's multi-colored dress had been ironed she would affirm that it was ready for use; but half an hour afterwards, when the dress was needed, she would be found ironing it.

Sawing wood just before a meal always puts me in the best of humor, and it is my custom to spend at least half an hour before dinner in that enjoyment; at least, it is my endeavor to do so. But while Mrs. Animule was with us this was an impossibility. I would just become interested in a certain log of wood, and in the progress my saw was making through it, when I would hear her voice calling that dinner was ready. Then I would go into the house, prepare for the meal and—wait. Waiting makes me nervous, and so after ten minutes, perhaps, I would pick up a magazine and begin to read. But everyone knows how impossible it is to read when waiting for something, whether it be a train or dinner. After a few fruitless attempts to fix my mind on the article before me I would go to the kitchen and ask about dinner. And she would invariably reply: "Wait just a minute!" It was always, "I'll be ready in just a minute," or, "Wait just a minute," with Mrs. Animule, until the sound of the word "minute" fairly made me groan. Dinner, however,

would presently arrive, but alas! for my time at the wood-pile! It had been spent in waiting. And why did I not keep on sawing wood after she had called until I thought that dinner was really ready? Any sawyer will tell you that a disturbance of this kind takes away all the pleasure of sawing wood; and to saw wood without enjoying it is reprehensible.

Mrs. Animule would undoubtedly have remained longer with us had it not been for her abuse of the wood-pile. When she first came I explained to her that she need not economize on wood. But I was not prepared for the wanton burning of it that followed. Here at least she was not miserly, but then it was not her wood that she was burning. The first day of her stay I noticed that the wood boxes were always empty a short time after I had filled them. I also noticed that not only were all the draughts of the stove turned on, but that both of the draught doors were kept wide open constantly. I asked her why that was. She replied that her fire was always going out. I then explained to her as clearly as possible that too much draught, besides burning the wood out too quickly, sent most of her heat up the chimney, or, if the wood happened to be damp, put the fire out. But my explanation was a waste of words. Her mental deafness would not let her

hear. It is truly remarkable how much better a person afflicted with this disease knows what you want than you do yourself, and how much better their way is than yours. In fact, your methods are never even considered. And when they fail, it is even more remarkable that they are unable to recognize that failure. The mentally deaf are always self-complacent, and after short acquaintance the phrase, "You can't l'arn me nothin'!" becomes synonymous with their names. However, by dint of using my morning and evening leisure I managed to keep the wood boxes full during the first three days of her stay. But on the fourth day I found that the ratio between supply and consumption was decidedly in favor of consumption, and on the fifth day I gave up in despair of being able to bring up as much wood as she could burn; besides, the six cords that I had split and piled for emergency were fast disappearing. Sawing wood was rapidly becoming a task. I decided that this would never do. Mrs. Animule must go, or the pleasure of my life would be blasted. And so Mrs. Animule went.

CHAPTER XVI.

TRAMPS.

ONE of the great drawbacks to living in a suburban town is tramps. I mean that it is a great drawback to a sawyer. A sawyer, of course, has his wood-pile in the back yard, and it is a well known fact that a wood-pile acts like a lodestone on a tramp. The tramp seems to think that the wood-pile is his by inheritance. It is not that he loves it like the sawyer—for he will not stand and contemplate it with that peculiar lighting up of countenance, that indefinable joyousness blended with almost lover-like affection—no, his love for it is of a lower order; he loves it as he does his tomato can, from force of association. Still, it is not to be denied that he does love it. And here begins my tale of woe.

I had just gotten nicely settled in my home, even to the wood-pile, when my wife began to be annoyed by tramps coming to the house. But as I was away from home during the greater part of the day I did not fully realize the import of her complaints. She said they began to come on the

very day that the wood-pile arrived. She noticed that they passed the other houses, but as soon as they caught sight of my wood-pile around they would come to the back door, asking for food and begging that they be allowed to saw some wood in return. This permission she refused them, well knowing my repugnance to having any one except a sawyer meddle with my saws.

A few days later, as I had a holiday, I remained at home and had an opportunity of verifying my wife's statements concerning the tramps; and I found that they were only too true. Every tramp that passed that way, and I counted fourteen during the day, would pause as soon as he saw the wood-pile, then make straight for the back door, request food and demand the use of the saw and axe. Of course I refused them the latter. Any sawyer will tell you that if there is one thing that he objects to more than another it is having a non-sawyer meddle with his wood-pile. The wood-pile is to him a sacred institution, and, as such, he will no more have a stranger of doubtful appearance invade it than he would allow a vandal to desecrate his family altar. I am by nature a kindly disposed man and dislike to refuse a request, even when made by a tramp, but this was a request to which I could not accede, yea, even though they had besought me with tears in their

eyes. Food they should have in abundance, but nothing should swerve me from my purpose of preserving the wood-pile unpolluted. I even instructed my wife, if they should persist, to drop a silver coin into their hands rather than have the wood-pile molested during my absence in the city.

However, the giving of money to tramps for not sawing my wood soon began to assume such proportions that I became alarmed. I must seek some other method to abate their attempts on my wood-pile or I should become bankrupt. I tried experiments of various kinds, such as locking the gate, which they would calmly climb over; posting a notice on the gate to the effect that tramps would receive nothing, which they never saw; and chaining a dog in the back yard, which animal they entirely ignored. All of my experiments were of no use, and I was about giving up in despair when Mrs. Animule came to live with us. She was a native of the town, and had evidently solved the tramp problem long before. At least the tramps all seemed to know her, perhaps by instinct, for tramps, like the lower order of animals, are highly endowed with instinct. I noticed that the few tramps who came to the back door after her arrival immediately left when she opened the door and spoke to them, and I wondered not a little what magic charm she possessed that could turn them

away so quickly and easily. One day when in the back yard I found the secret charm. A tramp knocked at the door. It was opened by Mrs. Animule. The tramp demanded food and the use of the saw. "Wait just a minute," said Mrs. Animule, as she closed the door. The tramp departed with downcast face. Even he, who had nothing to do but wait, could not "wait just a minute." And then I wrote in the notebook which I always carried with me: "Everything has its use, though we may be long in discovering it."

CHAPTER XVII.

SIMILITUDES.

WHEN at table I always cut the bread. My bread knife is fashioned somewhat like a saw. That is why I like to cut the bread myself. Of course cutting bread is not sawing wood, but then you cannot saw wood always, and the next best thing to sawing wood is the thing at hand that most nearly approaches it; for many things have their degrees of similitude to sawing wood, some being very similar and others less so.

The hay knife, or hay spade as it is sometimes termed, is a similitude of the saw, particularly that variety of hay knife that has the wavy edge like the modern bread knife. I always enjoyed using the hay knife when not sawing wood. It was particularly good sport, as a boy, to climb the immense straw stack, which was perhaps fifty feet in height and as many feet in diameter at the bottom, and from one side to cut across the stack, cut after cut, and to pitch the loosened straw down to the cattle waiting below. And what fun it was to watch the cattle romp about the yard, jumping and

frolicking over the straw, showing in an unmistakable manner their hearty appreciation of the choice bits of chaff with which they regaled themselves, and of the clean bed on which they slept. This cutting of straw from the stack was a similitude of sawing, but for all that it was not sawing wood.

If you ever happened to visit an old country schoolhouse of twenty years ago, probably one of the first things to attract your attention was the old-fashioned desk, made of pine boards an inch or more in thickness, and painted—that is, places showed here and there, in out of the way corners, that the desk once had been painted. You also probably noticed that these rough but strong desks, where two boys usually sat, had been a fertile field for the jackknife. You undoubtedly saw large square or oblong holes in the top of the desk, where the young idea had tested his steel. You likewise saw names innumerable carved on the desk top, and figures that are not to be found in any geometry. But perhaps you did not know the meaning of that deep cut crosswise of the desk top, at least eight inches deep, and several others of varying depth, that look as if they might have been made by a saw. And yet on closer examination they hardly look like saw cuts. But they are, though not made by an ordinary saw. They were

made by slate saws. Many a time, as a boy, have I used a slate saw. The rough edge of an unframed slate did me very well as a saw, and although it would cut into the pine very slowly, still it did cut, and made sawdust, too, as the old desk still testifies, and I was almost as happy as if in my father's back yard sawing wood with a real saw. The slate saw was one of the nearest approaches to the real article, and certainly its use as a saw was more enjoyable than its use as a slate.

But it was in winter, when the snow lay heavy upon the ground, and the ponds and creeks and brooks glared at you from their frozen depths, that I found another near approach to sawing wood. The ice saw now held its sway, and its muffled song could be heard over the frozen snow, a song most peculiar—a sort of "slush, slush" with a ring to it—the sound of steel eating its way through ice and drowning itself in water. But this song was dead like all the world around; it had no soul within, and jarred upon the Winter's solitude—a most unlovely thing.

Of course the wood saw might have been used for cutting ice, but its song would not have been joyous. A damsel digging a grave can not put forth her soul in joyous song, as when in leafy June she lightly treads the sunshine of the world and dreams her maiden dreams. No, leave the wood

saw for the wood alone, the soul of song then soars aloft, a living thing. There are no substitutes for sawing wood that can equal sawing wood itself, just as there are no substitutes for anything that will fully take the place of the original. The druggist has tried it from time immemorial; the producer of foods has tried it; in every department of life it has been tried, and they are trying it yet, but failure is the only possible outcome. The song of the saw when cutting ice is but a mockery of its glorious peals when cutting wood.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN IT SNOWS.

WHEN the November winds have snatched the last vestige of Summer from the trees; when up and down the sinuous valley and on the lofty mountain slopes no green thing, save the dark and sombre pines and brooding hemlocks, gladdens the eye; when the birds are gone to Southern homes and fairer skies; when the Autumn sunset sends a dying glow across the sky, and for a brief space melts in liquid bronze the lead of night, and then drops back and leaves it dull and cold, then does my heart chill within me; for I know that soon, aye! all too soon, the cold retreating sun will freeze the earth, and cheat us of his warmth. Then, when upon some early winter morn I raise my curtain high, the snow has come; noiselessly, stealthily, calmly it falls, and the dark of the earth is now white. And when the sun comes out, the whiteness, the brightness, and the cold, scintillating light almost deceive the eye by their beauty and grandeur, but not the heart. Heart speaks to

heart; the heart of Nature lies dead, and her cold, white bosom heaves no more. Her shroud is made, and it covers her well. Silence reigns with the Winter sun. Silence, and Peace, and Death.

But when the snow comes with its cold poetry, the colder prose of the snow shovel accompanies it. At this time I am a busy man. The snow gives a sawyer much work. It gives everyone added work. It is only by clearing the snow from our paths, and walks, and driveways that we can in a measure banish the deadness of winter from around us. And the first good fall of snow is always the worst to handle. We seem to have forgotten the many tricks and subterfuges of last winter whereby we avoided those nails in the front board-walk, and that slightly elevated plank in the rear walk, until we are forcibly reminded of them by several goodly pokes in the stomach or lower ribs by the long handle of the snow shovel; and we sometimes also forget where we left that snow shovel last spring, until we have purchased a new one. Then, when we are using it for the first time, we see our next-door neighbor calmly shoveling off his own walk with the supposedly lost shovel, and we now remember that we lent it to him last summer to shovel some sand in his back yard.

Personally, a fall of snow greatly inconveniences, nay, discomfits me; for now I must use

"Silence, and Peace, and Death."

my spare time in shoveling snow, whereas, if there had been no snow, I might have been enjoying the pleasures of sawing wood. But it is useless to stand contemplating the snow, for there is the broad front walk, with its array of nails, to be cleaned. Then there is the walk leading to the front piazza, and more nails. The piazza steps, and often the piazza itself, must be swept clear of snow. But I must go back and sweep the hitching-block. Then there is the path leading around the side of the house, embracing the side piazza, which has steps on both sides. The platform at the foot of the back piazza is wide and long; it also has nails but it must be cleaned before the snow becomes firmly packed upon it. The path to the washhouse is not very long, but the several loose boards that were laid down during the fall rains are sure to make the clearing of the snow extra hazardous. Then comes the path to the corner of the yard where the rosebush stands. Madame must examine to see if it is frozen. The longest path to clear is that which extends the length of the back yard to the street, and across the street to the river bank, where the ashes are emptied. No, not the longest, for I forgot to mention the path to the clothesline and along the clothesline. I say along the clothesline, for wherever the clothesline is hung there must the

path be. Sometimes it zigzags down the yard for several rods like a rail fence; sometimes it is in the form of a square; again it forms angles with everything in the yard; but, wherever it wanders, there must always be a wide, clear path beneath.

All of this sweeping and shoveling of snow must be done whether you are a sawyer or not. But if you are a sawyer your task is just begun. That is why I said that the snow gives a sawyer much work, for there must be a path to the wood-pile, the path must be swept very neatly, and that naturally suggests further clearing of snow. I always make it a point to clear the snow from the entire wood-yard. It makes me feel uneasy to have the snow under foot when I am sawing wood, in fact it takes away one-half of my pleasure. So the space for a dozen feet in each direction from the saw-horse is cleared of snow, first using the shovel, and then carefully going over the space with a broom. Then there is the pile of sawn and split wood to sweep free from snow, besides the large pile of logs that I always keep in the yard ready for use. When I am carefully sweeping the logs free from snow my wife often comes out and offers me the dusting cloth or dish towel, and asks if there is anything else that I would prefer with which to wipe those logs clean. But I al-

ways take this in good part. A woman is not a sawyer, and consequently cannot fully understand a sawyer's feelings on the subject. But any sawyer will tell you that my actions are not at all unusual. When we are at our usual employment we can work amid many inconveniences and disturbing elements, but when we engage in the pleasures of life our minds should be free from care, and unfettered by such bonds as ice and snow upon our wood-piles.

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CHAPTER XIX.

MY GARDEN.

MY GARDEN lies next to the wood-yard, just where a garden always should be if you would cultivate the æsthetic. It is a twofold pleasure to be able to saw wood and at the same time to breathe the blended souls of a thousand different blooms, and to rest the eye amid their myriad color-glances. The song of the saw, the perfume-laden air, and the nodding heads of multicolored flowers make choicest blend and harmonize with the soul's full desire. Peace rests in the penetralia of the mind, and angel voices whisper in the ear—that inner ear that hears not, yet perceives all things—that heavenly bliss is such, except more perfect. Beauty, and Harmony and Peace exist as one, and Joy and Innocence go hand in hand from flower to flower.

But my garden is a peculiar one. It is the result of advertising. It is an advertisement f advertising. Every flower, and plant and vine in my garden is the result of answering advertise-

ments. That is one reason why I call my garden a peculiar one. The other reason is that my flower beds, rose clumps and other groups of plants are arranged in a peculiar way, each group being the product of a single advertisement. Thus I have in a corner of the garden a clump of seven rose bushes which came with a six months' subscription to the *Ladies' Undulator* for only twenty-three cents, and which I have denominated the "Chameleon" group. Then there is the bed of two hundred and thirty-six varieties of plants which were sent for seventeen cents, with a four months' subscription to *The New Woman and Her Attributes,* a periodical devoted to the advancement of copper-toed shoes for women. This I have denominated the "Kicker" group. Next to this bed is another containing sixteen geranium slips, sent, for twenty-five cents, with a year's subcription to *Slum Life,* a quarterly publication devoted to the duties of college-bred women. This collection I have named the "Gerrae" group. Then over next to the wood-pile is the trellis of sweet peas, which were derived from a three months' subscription to *The Old Maids' Weekly,* a paper whose motto is, *"Nil Desperandum,"* and which claims to be devoted to the amelioration of the married sisters' state. Ten cents must be added for postage. I have named this the "Reluctant"

group. Upon the western fence the balloon-vine trails, the gift of *The Political Preacher,* which I am to receive for six months at a cost of only twenty-one cents in stamps. This paper devotes itself to spreading the gospel of reform. I was deeply interested in the first number that came to hand. It was full of suggestions and texts for political and reform sermons, but I saw no suggestion that might aid in the re-forming of man's spiritual nature. I placed the balloon-vine in the "Clerical" group, along with the squirting-cucumbers. The publisher of *Man's Life* sent me a single seed of bleeding heart. And when it grew and flowered, and I had read *Man's Life* with care, my heart was touched, and I placed this single plant all by itself and called the group "Christ's Love."

These, however, are only a few of the many groups of flowers in my garden. To the East, West, North and South I sent my answers to advertisements; and from all parts of the land came seeds and garden plants, and incidentally publications of all kinds.

Some of the groups that promised well in the beginning are now no more. The group of bluehearts, which *Higher Society* sent, was sat on by the baby, and all my coaxing could not make them survive the shock. Then there was the splendid group of butterfly flowers sent by *Gayety.* My

little boy sent them below while digging for worms for bait. The trumpet plant which the *Voice of Thunder* sent responded well to my care, but the cook drowned its voice with hot dish water.

Yet despite the accidents that have occurred to some of my flowers, the best in my garden survives and flourishes, and each flower is every day an increasing joy to me.

The literature that I have received also has its uses. It enables me to be philanthropic. Philanthropy, as I have grown to know it, means the giving away of that which we do not want, or for which we have no further use. And I give freely of this literature, just as I do of my old coats, hats, and shoes; and my name is prominent in the newspaper list of donors to the various charitable institutions.

Yes, my garden has been a success. And now let me advise all those with whom the growing of flowers has been a failure in the past to answer advertisements as I have done. Answering advertisements pays.

CHAPTER XX.

JONES NUMBER TWO.

JONES No. 2 is writing a book. Now there is nothing very strange in that fact, for Jones No. 2 is highly educated, and a man of ideas. But the manner in which Jones No. 2 is writing the book is very strange.

I said that Jones No. 2 was a man of ideas, and so he is, but his ideas have the peculiar habit of coming only at night, that is to say, his remarkable ideas. As soon as he has turned the gas out and ensconced himself beneath the covers these ideas begin to come, and as for the divine afflatus, it simply pours upon him. I myself have sometimes had this experience, but with me it is the exception, while with Jones No. 2 it is the rule. It is simply an impossibility for him to write during the day because of this lack of afflatus. He has told me that he has sat for hours in his office with his feet on the desk in front of him (I mention this position as being the true one when desiring to think deeply), a cob pipe between his teeth, and a pen wet with ink behind his right ear, and yet not able

to write a line. Coax his muse as he would, no afflatus could he obtain. But, presto! change! the moment he was in bed at night and had tucked the covers about himself, influx began. But again, the moment that he stepped out of bed and lit the gas in order to transmit to paper these gems divine, his mind was barren.

This state of affairs was distinctly disturbing to Jones No. 2, as well it might be. To have ideas by the score, and to be unable to write them down, or otherwise preserve them, is enough to exasperate any ordinary mortal beyond endurance.

I finally suggested to Jones No. 2 that he try writing in bed in the dark. He at once adopted the suggestion, and wrote nearly the whole of one night. He came into my office the next morning, carrying a bulky manuscript. He shook hands effusively and smiled as he laid the parcel on my desk, which signs of irrepressiveness with Jones No. 2 meant far more than the wildest abandon of joy with most men. He said that he had written on "The Value of Beer to Science." He had not yet looked at it, but we would read it together, he said. Now, I knew that Jones No. 2 was a poor penman, but I was not prepared for the fearful wanderings which his lead pencil took in the dark of night. We tried to-

gether to decipher a few words, but all that we could be sure of was the one word "beer."

We sat and looked at each other for fully two minutes, when it suddenly occurred to me to suggest the type-writer. He said that he would try it that night, but he did not smile.

I met him a week later and he looked radiant, that is, radiant for Jones No. 2.

"That was a great idea of yours—that idea about the type-writer," he began.

"Yes?" said I. "Find that you can use it all right in bed in the dark?"

"No," he replied, "I found that out before I had been in bed ten minutes. But by dint of great care I managed to write one sentence which has solved the problem. I wrote it over several times, so that I should be sure to have it right in the morning."

"Yes!" said I with interest.

"Yes," he went on, "I wrote: 'Have speaking-tube run from bed through wall into next room, where typewriter-girl will take from my dictation!' The very next day I acted upon this idea, and now every night when I feel the presence of the divine afflatus, I pass it on through the speaking-tube to the girl beyond the wall, and she sees that it doesn't escape."

"And your book?"

"Yes, my book is progressing finely."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SONG OF THE SAW.

THE world belongs to but one man—the poet. For he alone dwells among the souls of all created things, and comprehends the beauty of each part and all. He may not be a poet in the sense of one who makes, creates, in verse, upon the canvas, or the stringed lyre, but in the sense of one who feels the every throb of Beauty's pulse of love, whose senses all converge into one responsive chord that thrills at Nature's every touch, one vibrant chord that fills the soul with ecstacy.

Music, and Art, and Song, the poet's trine, that comprehends so much, and yet not all, for all he feels he cannot in any form express. The world above this world he lives, and from that source he breathes-in pure delight, which permeates his every unformed thought, and lends a fragrance, as from dewy flowers, to each cold word he writes and gives it life.

That world above this world flows into each and every thing, and there produces harmony, that harmony which bathes the heart in blissfulness. Who has not felt the thrill the wood-pile brings when notes of sawing wood are heard! Who does not love the wood-pile song!

All the world loves, and the poet tries to express that love, but human words are ill-adapted to portray that which is spiritual. They are but gross retainers, vessels, as it were, through which the soul must pierce that it may drink.

The wood-pile ever affords an unbounded field to the poet. The song of the saw fills his yearning soul and the whisperings of Nature satisfy him. Yet here less than in other fields can he convey to others what he feels. He perceives, but he is dumb. The poetic in the wood-pile transcends word expression. It can only be reached by that which is beyond the senses, and which we call spiritual influence, or perception. But it has been attempted.

Warder, who is the club poet, has written some verses which I shall here insert, as they will at once illustrate to any sawyer the futility of attempting to portray the poetic fire that is within the wood-pile. And Warder is a poet of no mean attainments.

THE SONG OF THE SAW.

Swish-ring! Swish-ring!
Listen! Listen!
I sing! I sing!
I sing of the wood-pile world;
I sing of the back-yard world;
I sing of the sawyer's world.
Swish-ring! Swish-ring!
Listen! Listen!
I sing! I sing!

Swish-ring! Swish-ring!
Listen! Listen!
Sweet news I bring.
Sweet news of a new-born babe;
Sweet news of a new-born Spring;
Sweet news of a new-born day.
Swish-ring! Swish ring!
Listen! Listen!
Sweet news I bring.

Swish-ring! Swish-ring!
Listen! Listen!
Rare news I bring.
Rare news of the noon-day hour;

Rare news of the mid-day meal;
Rare news of the heart's full bliss.
Swish-ring! Swish-ring!
Listen! Listen!
Rare news I bring.

Swish-ring! Swish-ring!
Listen! Listen!
Good news I bring.
Good news of the setting sun;
Good news of the day gone by;
Good news of the life to come.
Swish-ring! Swish-ring!
Listen! Listen!
Good news I bring.

CHAPTER XXII.

CATCHING WOOD.

WHEN the last vestige of ice has disappeared beneath the warming sun and frequent rains of Spring, and the chocolate colored stream boils high, and roughly laves its terraced banks, then is the harvest time of catching wood. Then it is that away up near the river's source, a hundred miles perhaps, and from all the river's tributaries, the woodsmen are splashing logs, and with the logs comes drift in pleasing quantity and great variety.

With the first sweep of dawn I am at the water's edge, and there with my sixteen-foot pike-pole I rejoice in catching wood. The wide expanse of river is now one mass of floating, charging logs, punctured here and there at irregular intervals by massive rafts of oak or pine. And as the panoramic ribbon unwinds from its endless roll I see, besides, great trees, uprooted in their entirety, sweep by; and portions of flood-torn bridges, timbers of riven buildings, newly sawn boards and planks from some lumber yard too near the water's

edge, and all the this and that of our higher civilization, mingled with Nature's woodland gifts and cast-off winter rags.

The river current just back of my house sets close in to the shore, bringing the great mass of logs and drift with it, and making that point an exceptionally good one for catching wood.

The wood, during an ordinary flood, usually runs for about three days. During that time the water edge is lined with catchers of wood. The usual method is to catch several saw-logs and anchor them near the shore. These logs serve as a sort of platform on which to stand, and from which one has a greater advantage in reaching out into the stream for the unmarked logs, slabs, boards and timbers that come floating down than when standing on the shore. The great mass of logs, stamped with the owner's mark, are to be left severely alone as far as using them for wood is concerned. But that matters little, as there is plenty of wood without them.

Boats are also used for catching wood where the current is not too swift. But this method is tedious, for one can scarcely pull more than one log to the shore at a time. It is not the true method. But, nevertheless, it is a pretty sight to see the many boats shooting in and out among the floating logs in quest of lawful prey.

To catch wood and then raft it down the river is a sport indulged in by many. We go several miles up the river to where the water has formed into an immense eddy. Here there is always sure to be an abundance of wood slowly floating round and round, and it is a small matter to catch it and form it into a raft. Then comes the exciting ride down the river, which becomes more exciting when the rapids are reached, and many a spill has there been from a jutting rock, but rarely a greater accident, as there is always a log at hand to which to cling.

I always catch a great deal more wood than I use, as the immense pile of logs on the river bank testifies. Yes, there is more wood there than I can ever use, and yet I keep on adding to it. It is like amassing a fortune—it is never quite large enough, nor ever will be. And yet I am always ready to give a part of it away. Whoever needs wood is welcome to come and take as much as he needs, nor does it send a pang to my heart to part with it. A sawyer always likes to have an abundance of wood about, but he is always willing to share with others. A sawyer's charity shall become proverbial. It shall be said: "It is as free as a sawyer's woodpile."

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF LOVE.

ALL nature whispers of love; and the youth and maiden listen; and Nature prevails; and they become lovers. And when they have tasted the first delights of love, Nature still leads them on and ever keeps the love-fire glowing, if they so will. Her Autumn sunsets fill their hearts with gladness, and her moon-lit, star-lit nights augment their yearning. Even the tempests' ragings—the blinding lightning's flash, and heaven's answering roar, awake in them new attributes of love—in the maiden desire for protection, and in the youth determination to protect. The flower-decked meadow land breathes deep content and beckons on. And when beneath some spreading tree they watch the rippling, babbling brook, they hear of love, constant, endless love. Nature everywhere awakens in them fresh delights and new desires, till love is at last complete.

However, Warder, who has made a close study of the subject, declares that the winds are more re-

sponsible for love matches than all else of nature besides. He says that it is commonly thought that love is borne on the wings of the south-wind exclusively, but this is not according to his observations. He believes that it takes all kinds of winds to make love.

The south-wind is gentle and persuasive, like the maiden; its breath is redolent of sweet odors, and of a balmy fragrance that is suggestive of peace and blissfulness. But its every gentle sigh speaks of unrest and makes man's heart beat more quickly. Its every puff and wave bespeak the maiden's heart.

But the north-wind bespeaks strength and boldness. It is wild and impulsive, like the youth. It tells of courage and manliness; of deep passion and power; of rugged will to overcome and mightiness to rule; of all that makes a man a man and leads him on.

The west-wind has more strength and purpose than the south-wind. It is more sober and mature and is, as it were, an older wind. To some extent it partakes of the south-wind, but in place of coyness it has directness and greater stability. It charms while it also calms the troubled spirit. It is a constant wind that keeps the fire living. It breathes the perfection of woman's love.

The east-wind whines and frets. It brings bit-

ter tears of remorse, and sadness follows in its wake. It seems to blow around the whole earth, and to recall to the memory all the past aches and pains of love. It is a selfish wind and is always reminiscent of the dark days of love. However, it rarely blows directly from the East for any great length of time, but veers somewhat to the South, and becomes hysterical. Or else it veers toward the North and becomes sullen and morose. But this rarely lasts for long, as a northeast wind as a rule rapidly changes into a good, stiff, healthful northern breeze; just as a southeast wind suddenly ceases, and a fair breeze springs up from the West.

Warder is fond of writing poetry on this subject. Here is one of the dozens of poems which he has written about love and the winds:

LOVE'S AWAKENING.

Out of the South a whisper came,
Love! I love.
The East wind rustled, I heard the name,
Love! I love.
The Northern breezes echoed the same,
Love! I love.
The West sent zephyrs to make the claim,
Love! I love.

Out of my heart an answer came,
O love, my love!
Forth from my trembling lips thy name,
O love, my love!
Body and soul, each echoes the same,
O love, my love!
Heart of my heart, thyself I claim,
O love, my love!

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WOOD-PILE AND THE WASH-TUB.

SHORTLY after my wife and I had moved to our suburban home, I found that she was becoming jealous, not of some other woman, but of my attachment to the wood-pile. Perhaps I should have said envious of the pleasure I took in sawing wood, but neither word quite expresses my meaning. It is extremely difficult at times to choose words that shall express the relations of the wood-pile to the outside world, but no doubt, in time new words will be found that shall express all phases of wood-pile life.

But as to my wife, it could be plainly seen she felt that here was a pleasure which she could not fully share with me, and it affected her deeply. But women are creatures of great resource, and it was not many days before she came to me with her face radiant. She had found the counterpart of sawing wood. She called it "wash-tub recreation." At first I demurred at this innovation in the household, but she soon demonstrated to me

that she was in the right. What woman cannot! And if she could not, what difference would it make! Her perception in uses that belong to her is beyond man's comprehension.

And so my wife recreates herself at the wash-tub while I am at the wood-pile, and I must admit that it is an added pleasure to look up from my sawing of wood and see her beaming face and suds-flecked arms as she bends over the wash-tub on the back porch of a summer's morning.

Then again there is the added zest that it gives to our conversation, as we sit out a winter's evening beside the crackling wood fire and discuss the pleasures of our chosen recreations; for, widely different though they are, still they have some things in common.

My wife—They at least have in common that they are very uncommon forms of recreation. It is astonishing to me that people have not found out the pleasure that they can afford. Women nowadays tire themselves out and wear themselves out in their endeavor to find some means of exercise which they think is suited to them. And in the meantime the servants at home are performing all of those duties and pleasures which are so well calculated to keep both body and mind in a state of health.

Myself—The waters of the river Jordan are as

unattractive now as they were of old. The common things of life are despised because of their commonness. If the wife could only see the duties of the home as privileges, we should not see so much of this running around in order to find something to do. The household drudge that Whittier speaks of in his "Maud Müller" is a drudge only because she makes herself one. She is always reminiscent of "what might have been"; always dreaming of the impossible; always longing for that which is unattainable. This is a most unhealthful mental condition. There is nothing of lofty aspiration about it. There are too many people of the Maud Müller type, who think that they are aspiring to high ideals just because they are dissatisfied with everything of their present condition.

My wife—Dissatisfaction with one's duty always makes it drudgery. We should aim to excel in that which lies before us, rather than aspire to something for which we are totally unfit. To sit and cultivate the bump of discontent because we are not kings and queens, does not savor of lofty aspiration. Some women are willing to endure any sacrifice in order to engage in those occupations which do not properly belong to them, while they shun as unworthy of themselves the occupations of the home,

which in reality constitute a far nobler vocation for a woman than any business or profession.

Myself—High and low are only relative terms when applied to the king on his throne and to the mechanic at his bench. But they become absolute when applied to the one who excels in his own station of life. The man who shirks his task, or at most is indifferent to it, no matter whether he be a cow-puncher or a prince, is always low.

My wife—One great trouble, and perhaps the great trouble, is that the country is overrun with reform. Everyone is anxious to reform everyone else except himself.

Myself—Reform must begin with the individual if it is to be genuine, and not a fad. Society is forever in an uproar, and no one seems to knows what is the matter. It makes me think of what an Irishman once said to his doctor. "Docther," he said, "it's a sick man that I am. Thur's something wrong that ain't right."

My wife—That is the trouble—reform is a fad. Among cultured women there is a prevailing idea that they must reform somebody or something. As soon as they are out of college, and sometimes before, our young women launch forth their reform schemes. Each one has a theory to work out, and she nobly begins to look for subjects on whom to experiment. Her avowed object is to do good,

so she takes the burden of all mankind upon her shoulders and starts out in her new profession of being a providence. And, strange as it may seem, she finds a certain following, who, for a consideration, are willing that she lord it over them for a time.

Myself—True charity consists, first of all, in reforming one's self; of having some duty, and performing it well; and of allowing others perfect freedom in performing their duties. The modern idea of doing good seems to be that of forcing others to believe as you do, and all the natural sequelæ that result from the process.

CHAPTER XXV.

MY STUDY.

EVERYONE ought to have a study which should also be his library, even if he has for books only the Bible and Dutton's work on "Saws, and How to Use Them." The study, as I take it, is the one retreat in the household where one can enter and leave the outside world behind, and enter into another outside world of books, or into a new world born of one's imagination. There, undisturbed, one may meditate and dream, and live in the past, the present, or the future.

Of course a sawyer's study will differ from that of others. He will, if possible, have his study windows looking out into the back yard, and the interior decorations will naturally reflect the woodpile and sawing wood. It should be no more surprising to see the walls of a sawyer's study decorated with saws and axes, and with pike-poles for catching wood, than to see the mantel, the table and the book-cases of a confirmed smoker decorated with his meerschaum, his brierwood, and even his favorite corncob, or to see my wife's study festooned with clotheslines.

My own study is situated on the second floor of my house. It has a southern and western exposure, thus ensuring an abundance of sunshine, and a full view of my wood-pile and garden, while beyond lie the blue of the river and the peaceful grandeur of the mountains.

Two of the walls of my study are lined with book-cases, a third side is occupied by a case where I keep my saws and axes; and the fourth side is taken up to a large extent by a bay window. Of my books I need say nothing, as everyone knows what he will find in a good library, but of my saws —well, saws are worth talking about.

Different saws sing different songs. This depends upon their temper, just as it does with men, but there is this difference: A saw always keeps the temper that it had when it came into existence, while the human temper is forever changing. This changeability undoubtedly has its advantages, as it increases our wants, and to some extent takes the humdrum quality out of life. Man's constant cry is: "Give me something new! Give me a change, be it ever so slight!" It is the old cry that

> *"Man wants but little here below,*
> *Nor wants that little long."*

He tires of it, and wants another "little" with which to amuse himself. I suppose that is why a

sawyer wants so many saws, though he never entirely tires of an old saw, if it has been a good one. And, of course, it is a pleasant thing to have several saws with different sets for the different varieties of wood.

The Ringold saw is my favorite. It keeps sharp longer than any other saw that I have ever had, and its thin, shining blade always gladdens the eye. Its song is full of expression, and its sharp, silvery tones tell of its worth.

In the back of the case hangs the first saw that I ever owned. It shows the deep scars of rust and the wear of time, and its teeth have been so filed down and broken, and it has been gummed out so many times, that now it is but a shadow of its former self. It is the old man among my saws, useless in its former sphere of life, but dearly loved and revered.

Then there is the saw that my uncle gave me. He knew nothing about saws. I keep it as a curiosity.

The saw that I use for soft white pine and the one I use for well seasoned hardwoods hang side by side, their glittering steel reflecting the firelight upon the book-case opposite and bringing into relief Dutton's treatise. I take the book down from the case and read: "A saw reflects the character of its owner, just as a room reflects the character of its occupant."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A NIGHT AT THE CLUB.

ALTHOUGH it was still early in the evening, there was a goodly number of sawyers seated about the large open fireplace in the club quarters. Outside the wind was howling, and piling the snow in deep, solid drifts behind the fences and other objects that afforded some resistance to its violence. Inside the frost was thick on the window panes, but the crackling and sputtering of the hemlock, the steady, brilliant flames from a few pine knots, and the presence of a huge backlog of hickory that was just beginning to burn, made the outside evidences of Winter all the more acceptable, and there was every promise of a cheerful evening.

Smithers, who was seated in a comfortable chair, with his hands outstretched toward the blaze, was saying: "If there is one thing that I enjoy more than another, it is basking before a fire like this on a winter's evening. After a hard day's work there is nothing that soothes me

more than to sit listening to the snapping and crackling and subdued roaring of an open fire. It rests me more than anything else, except, of course, sawing wood."

Voices—Except, of course, sawing wood.

Smithers—But then one cannot always saw wood.

Voices—(sadly)—No! No! No!

The Poet—If there is no objection I will read the poem that I have prepared for this evening.

All look up expectantly, and the poet reads:

After the wood is sawn,
What can there better be
Than sitting before an open fire
Where the curling tongues of flame inspire
Many a timely yawn?
What can there better be
After the wood is sawn?
Nothing, nothing, nothing as good,
Except—the sawing of more wood.

After the wood is burned,
What can there better be
Than sleeping upon a soft, warm bed,
Till the dreams of sleep are all but sped,
Or into day-dreams turned?

What can there better be
After the wood is burned?
Nothing, nothing, nothing as good,
Except—the sawing of more wood.

After the sleep is slept,
What can there better be
Than standing out in the frosty air,
And viewing the wood-pile's beauty fair,
Just to see if it's kept?
What can there better be
After the sleep is slept?
Nothing, nothing, nothing as good,
Except—the sawing of more wood.

Smithers—Of course! Of course! That poem shows that the poet is a true sawyer. It comes from the heart and it goes to the heart. It teaches us that the other pleasures of life are to be enjoyed as a matter of course, but that they are as nothing when compared with the delightfulness of sawing wood. It teaches that we should always be looking for an ideal in every phase of life, and, when that ideal is found, we should make it a part of ourselves. That is the kind of poetry that I appreciate. It takes a firm stand for what is best.

Billings—Yes, it is very good indeed. But I have a feeling that I have heard it before.

Jimmie—The last verse certainly is true to the life. Who ever heard of a sawyer who didn't take a look at his wood-pile the very first thing in the morning after rising!

Dutton—I always admired that little poem of yours, Warder, that tells of the greeting of the sun and the morning-glory. Every morning in summer when I go out to the wood-yard, I see the morning-glories trailing over the veranda, beautiful in their gorgeous colors and living green and setting of sparkling dewdrops, and I seem to hear them greeting the rising sun. Will you kindly read it for us?

The poet reads as requested:

THE MORNING-GLORY.

With the first beams of morning
My petals I unfold;
I greet the day with purple,
The day greets me with gold.

Sweet are the first few kisses,
Blissful the morning hours,
Till passion has consumed me,
And kisses killed my flowers.

Billings—Good! Very good! But I have a feeling that I have read it or heard it before.

Joyce—A very pretty conceit, but I fail to see what connection it has with the wood-pile.

Dutton—There is connection by association, I should say. You know, Joyce, as well as I do, that when I speak of my wood-pile, I mean more than my wood-pile *per se*. I mean my wood-pile and everything that I associate with it.

The Poet—Dutton is right. He associates his early morning's recreation at the wood-pile with the opening of his morning-glories. Consequently he understands the import of the poem. Freely interpreted, it means, that with the first streak of dawn I am up and out at the wood-pile. I greet the world with the song of the saw. The world greets me with the rising sun, the singing of birds, the unfolding of flowers, and all else of nature with which my soul sympathizes. Poetry speaks in universal terms, within which are many and varied particulars, making it susceptible of almost as many interpretations as there are individuals. Take Browning as an instance. He means everything and nothing. Choose fifty poetical phrases out of as many different authors, and give them mechanical connection, and you will have a poem which means nothing, yet everything. Nothing because there is no connected

thought; everything because the language is universal and all-inclusive.

Billings—Just as the wood-pile is all-inclusive! Yes, I think I have heard that before.

Glenmore—I have been thinking for some time of the education of our children. Nothing whatever of wood-pile lore is taught them in the schools, and, as the sons and daughters of sawyers, they should be well instructed in that department of knowledge. It is true that a few fairy tales refer to the wood chopper and the cutting of wood, but only incidentally. What we need is a work dealing with all phases of wood-pile life—a compilation of historical pieces for use in the home.

Jones No. 2—I, myself, have long felt the want of good wood-pile literature, and, finally, becoming tired of waiting for someone to produce it, I have made a beginning myself. I am at work at present on a series of short stories, each of which revolves about the central idea of the wood-pile.

Voices—Bravo! Hear!

Billings—The idea is a good one. I have heard of it before.

Rawlins—I am sure that we will all work together in this important use. I, myself, have gathered together several important data, which I shall be glad to contribute. But more of this another time, for I see that the back-log has burned through, and we all know what that means.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MOODS AND ANTIDOTES.

WHEN all the world is smiling but myself, I drag my weariness into the back yard, and there I lay it down. I lay it down and take the saw in hand, for sawing wood is death to moodiness. And when the saw has done its work, I also smile, and, smiling, saw more wood. But if it chance that moody thoughts assail when darkness wings about the study lamp, or frightened, settles back where'er she may, I throw upon the fire some hemlock wood, some logs of birch and oak, and, drawing close my chair, I watch the ruddy glow and listen to the music of the hearth; and all is well.

But the mere act of sawing wood is not always sufficient to drive the blues away. Here, as in most other phases of life, one must individualize. The prescription must be based upon a knowledge of causes. Just as the doctor says that I need a tonic, but that he must consider what kind of a tonic, so say I that he needs sawing wood, but that I must choose the kind of wood that he needs,

the particular variety that is best adapted to him, as shown by the cause of his being out of humor. And so I keep on hand a variety of wood to meet the demands of the different kinds of moodiness. Thus it is that when I can trace my downheartedness to the inability to digest a particularly good dinner, I place a stick of woolly basswood upon the saw-horse. This woolliness of the wood makes the saw run hard and draws the poison out; and then I smile.

When I have overslept, and am late at the office, and there is a press of work, and I hurry in order to make up for the loss of time, and everything goes wrong in consequence, I need some pine to saw. The saw goes through the soft pine wood rapidly, and it cheers me to see that I am in a fair way to accomplish something at last; and again I smile.

Then there are days when I work too hard, and come home in the evening tired out, and vainly wondering if life means only office grind. Then a log of hickory meets my needs. The wood is hard, and the saw descends but slowly, but its voice peals forth in sharp commands to persevere, or fills the air with ringing laughter; and I laugh from infection.

And when my favorite candidate for this or that has been defeated at the polls, and all the country

seems about to fall into rack and ruin, I crave a chestnut log, the most unprofitable of wood to saw.

Hemlock is good for bitterness. 'Tis full of knots, which are as hard as any poor man's lot in life. 'Tis full of splinters too; and they are good for bitterness. But it is the dulcet strains within the hemlock wood that wreathe my face in smiles, and make the bitter sweet; and the quickly moving saw that brings them forth.

When my face pales and all the world whirls round from sudden shock of death, the ash tree waits to sympathize; and well it does its part. But still I cannot smile, for though it calms my soul, it does no more.

Oak is a pleasant wood to saw; it saws just right. The sawdust is not so thick and sticky that it clogs the saw, nor is it so fine that it shows that the saw is making but poor progress through the wood. Other woods are too hard or too soft; they saw too slowly or too rapidly for the ordinary ills of life, but the good old oak is the happy medium. It is like the well balanced gentleman who sits down to a wholesome meal, and with even tenor eats and is satisfied. Give me the good old oak for everyday use!

Maple, and birch, and elm all serve their use, but here it were not best to say what use. The skeleton in the closet only grins.

Perhaps you may smile and think these words untrue; but listen! Did you ever hear that some men drive away their care by whistling tunes? I am sure that you have whistled dull care away yourself. Listen, and I will impart a secret! 'Tis this: Whistling is good, but sawing wood is best.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PASSING OF DUTTON.

"To THE unbeliever in a spiritual existence, death signifies the end of all things with man. It signifies blankness, oblivion and annihilation—the blotting out of the forever. No soul, no God, no Hereafter is his creed. Man came from Somewhere, but he goes to Nowhere. Death simply converts him into nothing, and thus he becomes non-existent.

"But in the mind of one to whom a spiritual existence is a reality, the idea of non-existence after death cannot be formed. The knowledge of man's being a soul precludes the idea of non-existence. Death to him signifies the death of the body only, the casting aside of that which never did exist except to clothe the soul—the garment which Death removes in love, and not in hate, that the life may exist in full in its proper sphere. I never can think of Death as seated upon a dark-hued horse, ready to smite whome'er he casts his evil eye upon; nor yet as a grinning devil skeleton who singles out his victims for tor-

ture. No, I rather think of Death as a beautiful angel, pure and meek, who looks upon our world with pitying eyes, yet full of love, and beckons us to leave our rags of earth behind, and dwell in life eternal."

It was thus that Dutton spoke with me as I sat at his bedside. And Dutton was dying; there could be no doubt of that. It seemed hard to lose him, for we all liked Dutton. He had come among us when the club was first formed, and it almost seemed now as if there would be no club when he was gone. He was a sawyer, every inch of him, and yet he was far more. There was little of surface to him, his character having depth and strength like the silent river that bears away its many fathoms of water without complaint or surface agony. His eyes told you all this. They laid his whole soul bare before you. They were not those large, wide-open eyes, the so-called fathomless eyes, that are only fathomless because there is nothing behind them to fathom; they were those eyes that reflect a lovely soul, and lend a glad radiance and soul-beauty to otherwise unhandsome features.

"Then, Dutton," I said, "you are not afraid to die There is nothing awful or terrible about death to you?"

"No," he replied, "I have never feared death

since I knew what death really meant. The almost universal fear of death is due to ignorance of the reality of life after death. Can you imagine the fright we should be in if obliged to divest ourselves of an old suit of clothes, never to put them on again, and at the same time to be most fearfully uncertain as to whether there were any other clothes that we should be allowed to wear? That is how ignorance acts on those who are about to take on death; they are most fearfully uncertain as to whether there is anything beyond it; and they are most decidedly averse to becoming Nothings."

Here he was seized with a paroxysm of coughing, lasting several minutes, and leaving him exhausted and gasping for breath. I raised him into a more comfortable position on his pillows, and advised him to lie quiet, and not to exert himself by talking to me. He smiled his thanks, and lay quiet for a few minutes. Then he began again: "It must seem strange to you that I, who am so near death, should desire to talk about it so constantly. But this sickness has given me the zest of a little child who is forever talking about his expected visit in the country, or some other all-absorbing festivity. And yet it is perfectly natural that I should think and talk so much about it. If I were about to take a trip to

the North Pole, I am sure that nothing else would be on my mind for weeks beforehand. That would be the most natural effect of such a projected journey; and why should it not be the same when we are about to die? Of course it is hard to leave one's friends, but not harder than when starting on a journey that will entail an absence of several years, with perhaps no communication with them during that time. Only from the journey of death I shall not return, but my friends will come to me, some very soon, others only after years. In dying I leave nothing behind of value that shall not again be mine. Why then should I give dying any greater consideration than the other uses of life?"

After this he lay quiet, apparently in deep thought, and when I bent over him as I arose to go, he slept.

Two days later a message came that Dutton was going. I hastened to his bedside. He smiled as I pressed his hand, and as our eyes met his eyes told me what his lips could not. They told me that he was going on a pleasant journey, and they bade me an impressive farewell until we should meet again. Then his eyes closed, his hand relaxed in my grasp, a long sighing breath escaped from his lips, his chest ceased to move, and I knew that Dutton had departed.

Three days later I stood by the open grave that had been prepared to receive—not what had been Dutton—but that which had been the earthly form of Dutton. I stood and listened to the reading of the priest: "When the body is no longer able to perform the functions proper to it in the natural world, then man is said to die. But still he does not die, but is only separated from the corporeal part which was of use to him in his life in this world; the man himself does not die; for man is not man from the body, but from the spirit, and that which is spiritual never dies. Hence it is evident that the soul, which is the very man himself, does not die, but passes from this world into another where it may dwell in fulness."

And when he had finished my heart was comforted, and I felt that I should, indeed, see my friend again.

THE END.

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